Hh: 25: 8:

Imprimatur,

May 28.
1677.

Guil. Jane R. P. D.
Hen. Epiſc. *Lond.*
à Sacris Dom.

E. ε. 35 ~~BB. 13.~~
Bedford Library.

A Diſcourſe CONCERNING REPENTANCE.

By *N. INGELO* D.D.

Ἡ δὲ μετάνοια αὕτη Φιλοσοφίας ἀρχὴ γίνεται, καὶ τῆς ἀμεταμελήτου ζωῆς ἡ πρώτη πρασκευή.

LONDON,

Printed by *T. R.* for *Richard Marriott*, and ſold by *George Marriott* at the Sign of the *Temple*, near the *Inner Temple* Gate, *Fleetſtreet*. 1677.

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A DISCOURSE CONCERNING REPENTANCE.

~~PART I.~~

LUKE 24. 47.

That Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins ſhould be preached in his Name among all Nations.

WHen man came out of his Creators hands, he was happy, and ſo long as he kept the ſtate of his Nature he

continued ſuch; for he enjoyed his Makers favour, he walked with God, had a friendly Converſe with him; and as he continually made a thankful acknowledgment of his dependance upon his Goodneſs, and perform'd due Obedience to his Will, ſo he was always under the care of his Providence, and the Influences of his Grace, which was ſo great a felicity, that his condition might well be ſignified by the name of the place in which he dwelt, *The Paradiſe of Eden*, i. e. *The Garden of Delight.*

But ſee the frailty of created Beings when they are a little truſted with themſelves. Man ſoon fell from his happineſs. He was not

not content with his Makers allowance; he would provide better for himſelf ſome other way. But ſo diſregarding his Creators Laws, he threw himſelf out of the Divine favour, and with himſelf, his Poſterity, treading in the ſame ſteps of Diſobedience, though they knew how dear it coſt their Forefather, by the miſerable Inheritance which he left them: The unhappineſs of the Eſtate ſo bequeathed being ſo heavy, that men when they conſidered it, would rather never have been born, than thrown under the weight of it: The merciful Son of God, with an unſpeakable compaſſion, interpoſed himſelf between them and the dreaded Ruin, and interceded

for their pardon. The eternal Father was highly pleaſed with his Mediation; and as for his ſake he did not lock the door of Hope againſt the firſt Runagate, ſo neither did he afterward ſhut up his diſobedient Children in the irrecoverable miſery of their Sin. For though they have caſt themſelves out of the Mercies of the ancient Covenant, by breaking the Conditions of it, yet the Son of God was pleaſed to be the Angel of a new Covenant, and brought it from Heaven, and ſent his Celeſtial Meſſengers at his Birth to proclaim the Good-will which was contained in it, and ſeal'd it with his Blood, which when he was going to die, he

ſaid

ſaid he would *ſhed for the remiſſion of Sins*: And having performed that Promiſe full of unſpeakable kindneſs, when he was raiſed from the dead, he commanded his Servants, whom he had made intimate with the deſign of his Mercy, that they ſhould publiſh it to all the World, and in his Name preach Repentance, and upon that promiſe forgiveneſs of ſin, and declare that God would now accept of Return to Duty inſtead of Obedience which had never fail'd; and that all ſuch of ſinful Mankind as would run away from their diſobedient Party, acknowledge their Fault, lament their Rebellion, throw down their Arms, yield to Mercy,

cy, and return to their Allegiance, ſhould come to be as they were at firſt by Gods allowance, be put into the way of Happineſs again: For by the forgiveneſs of their ſins God reſtores them to his Favour; a Grace denied to a higher ſort of Creatures than we are, Angels, when by ſin they flung themſelves out of Heaven.

I have deſigned this Diſcourſe to treat of the way which God hath been pleaſed to accept, and our Saviour to declare, for our eſcaping the miſery of ſin, which is Repentance. And of this I ſhall ſpeak as I find it deſcribed in the New Teſtament, where two words are chiefly uſed to expreſs

preſs the nature of it, Μετάνοια, and Μεταμέλεια.

1. Change of mind as to what is paſt.
2. Better care for the future.

And theſe I ſhall explain as Holy Writ and the practiſe of Gods Church do direct.

1. A change of mind as to what is paſt; So *Tertull.* *In Græco ſono Pœnitentiæ nomen ab animi demutatione compoſitum eſt*; which he ſaid reſpecting the word μετάνοια. He which repents muſt begin with a ſevere condemnation of his former courſe: So *Iſidor. Peluſiota. l.* 4. *c.*60. Μεγίστη βοήθεια εἰς τὸ μεταγνῶναι ἡ κατάγνωσις τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

ριας. How can he repent of what he hath done, who doth not condemn it as wicked? This part of Repentance expresseth it self in two things.

1. Humble Confession of Sin.
2. Earnest Prayer for Pardon.

1. Humble confession of sin, which is both required in many places of Scripture, and appears to have been the practise of Penitents. *He which confesseth and forsaketh finds mercy--- If we confess our sins he is faithful--- It is meet to be said unto God* I have sinned---- He can never hope for pardon who will not confess his sin. As Confession belongs to Re-

epentance, ſo if it be right, it uſt have theſe two things joyned ith it.

1. Sorrow,
and
2. Shame.

1. We muſt make our Con-ſſions, having in our ſouls a reat ſorrow for having offended od, a great diſpleaſure againſt ur ſelves for our diſobedience. hen the Apoſtle perceived the *orinthians* to have fallen into a reat ſin, he wrote a ſharp Let-er to them, and the conſiderati-n of that, and what they had one, wrought in them the be-inning of Repentance, *a godly* 2 Cor. 7. 9. *ſorrow*,

ſorrow, or ſorrow according to God, which he doth require, and will accept if it be ſincere, according to the nature of the ſin committed. It is fit that he who hath ſinned ſhould be grieved, when he conſiders what he hath done, and ſay as he did, *Eheu! quàm ego totus diſpliceo mihi! Pœnitentia denotat pœnam animi de re perperam geſtâ ſibi diſplicentis.* St. Acts 2. *Peters* Penitents were ſaid to be pricked in their Hearts; and the Scripture calls true Repentance *a* Pſal. 51. *broken heart, a contrite ſpirit.* And true Penitents uſually expreſſed their ſorrow in tears, with which Pſal. 6. 6. *David* is ſaid *to water his Couch*---- and St. *Peter*, upon conſideration of his grand ſin is ſaid to have gone

gone forth of the Company, and to have *wept bitterly.* He which truly conſiders what it is to have ſinned, would if he could, waſh away the ſtain with tears of blood. When the weight of the ſins of others began to ſit cloſe and heavy upon our Saviours ſhoulders, it put him into ſuch an Agony, that it made clammy drops of thick ſweat, like viſcous blood, trickle from his Body to the ground.

Therefore Penitents of old, to expreſs their due grief, uſed to gird themſelves with Sackcloth, and ſit in Aſhes: For anciently in great mournings it was the cuſtom to put on Sackcloth, to cover their heads with Aſhes, and ſit in the Duſt. As we ſee in the Story

Story of the King of *Niniveh* in that great affliction of ſoul which ſurpriſed him upon *Jonas*'s denunciation of wrath againſt him and his people; and in the caſe of *Thamar*, in the aſtoniſhing grief which ſeized her upon the loſs of her Honour: So *Job* when he humbled himſelf for ſpeaking too boldly of the myſtery of Gods Providence, is ſaid to have *repented in Sackcloth and Aſhes.* To this alſo they joyned Faſting, acknowledging that by reaſon of their ſins they were not worthy to eat, and ſo not to live; and when they did ſo, were ſaid *to afflict their ſouls*: For true Penitents have, as the Apoſtle obſerved in the *Corinthians*, *Indignation* againſt their

their ſins, and *Revenge* upon themſelves for committing them. To theſe alſo in their Penance they added *Expiatory Offerings*, confeſſing when they kill'd the Sacrifice, they themſelves deſerved to die more than the *Lamb* or *Goat* did; *Quæ me non dignior hoſtia vitâ eſt?* There is nothing ſo bad but it deſerves to live rather than I the ſinner who offer it. They ſaw the vileneſs and danger of ſin, and therefore cried out, *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do to be ſaved?* Or as they in *Micah*, *O that I had any ἀνάλλαγμα, any thing to give in exchange for my ſoul to my offended God, thouſands of Rams, or ten thouſand Rivers of Oyl!*

By theſe Expreſſions we may perceive what a deep ſenſe they had of the baſeneſs of ſin, and how truly they were grieved that by it they had offended God. To this I need add no more but the practiſe of the Primitive Church, to ſhow what a mighty ſorrow the Penitents of thoſe days thought neceſſary to their Repentance. It is enough to amaze careleſs Souls to read it as it is deſcribed by *Tertullian*, and St. *Gregory Nazianzen*. Penitents lay proſtrate at the Church doors in Sackcloth, and Aſhes, and Horrour; intreating the whole Fraternity, begging the prayers of Presbyters and Widows, taking hold of the Garments and Knees of

Tertul. de Pudicitia, & de Pœnitentia. Greg. Naz. de Pœnitentia.

of ſuch as entred into the Church, kiſſing their footſteps, as well as the Chains of Martyrs in Priſons, with bare knees and wet eyes, beſeeching their Prayers for their pardon.

And though the bad ſinners of our times poſſibly think them fooliſh in ſo great expreſſions of ſorrow, yet I doubt, when things come to be determined before the Great Tribunal of Chriſt, that they will be judged ſottiſh for their vain Cenſure, and that want of great grief for their ſins will not then be eſteemed courage, but ſearedneſs of Conſcience. He is moſt miſerable who ſins and repents not; and his ſorrow will do him little good, which doth not

wound ſin to the heart, which doth not ſmite through, and cut in pieces the roots of Diſobedience, which are deep planted in a hard heart.

2. We are alſo to joyn ſhame with our ſorrow: Shame is the proper attendant of ſin, as we may ſee in our firſt Parents, who were ſo aſhamed of themſelves after they had ſinned, that they ſought, as well as they could, to hide themſelves from the Face of God; not only for fear of being puniſhed by him, but being aſhamed of themſelves, that for doing unworthily they had deſerved it. There is great reaſon we ſhould entertain this paſſion of ſoul. The penitent ſinner will find things enough

nough to be aſhamed of, if he conſider. What are they? Five.

1. His Impudence, that he durſt ſin againſt God; therefore *Ezra* in his penitent Confeſſion of the great ſins which he then lamented, ſays, *O my God, I am aſhamed to look up, and bluſh to lift up my face to thee; for our iniquities are increaſed, and our ſins are grown up to Heaven. We are in our treſpaſſes, and cannot ſtand before thee, becauſe of them.* He was ſo aſhamed, that he ſays, *And now, O our God, what ſhall we ſay, for we have forſaken thy Commandments?* So the Penitent in *Jeremiah*, *When I repented I was aſhamed*---And the Converts whom St. *Paul* mentions, were aſhamed to think of their former practiſe;

Ezr. 9. 6. v. 15. v. 10. Jer. 31. 19.

Rom. 6. 21. *What fruit had you in thoſe things whereof you are now aſhamed?* There is great Reaſon for this. For men are aſhamed when they do any thing that is unbecoming them. It is a baſe thing for a man to do that which is unworthy of what he is, or profeſſeth himſelf to be. Sin is the moſt unbecoming thing in the World, contrary to our Nature, unworthy of a reaſonable Creature, abſurd in regard of our ſtate in Being; doth debaſe and degrade the perſon that commits it. Therefore when *Aaron* had conſented to Idolatry with the people, it is ſaid, *They made him naked to his ſhame.* What a High Prieſt and worſhip a Calf? A Creature and diſobedient to him that

that made it! It is ſaid of the Jews, when converted, that they *ſhould loath themſelves for all their abominations.* Nothing can make us ſo vile as ſinning againſt God. He which conſents to ſin, diſrobes himſelf of the dignity of his Nature, Innocence. And when men come to that impudence, that they are not aſhamed of ſin, it is noted in Scripture as the height of all Villany, and is a ſtate near to utter Ruin. Men may grow ſo baſe as to *glory in their ſhame*; *i. e.* in ſuch things of which they ought to be aſhamed, as the Apoſtle tells us, and make no matter of it. So the Prophet *Jeremiah* of thoſe in his time, *Were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination*; no, Jer. 6 15.

Jer. 5. 3. *they were not aſhamed, neither could they bluſh.* No; but as in another place, they had a *Whores forehead*, made *their faces harder than a Rock.* But their ruin followed at their heels, and overtook them all, except ſome few, who repenting, ſhar'd another temper, and ſaid,

—3 25. *We lie down in ſhame, and our confuſion covereth us; for we have ſinned againſt the Lord our God, and have diſobeyed his voice.* So the repenting Prodigal, *O Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven and againſt Thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.* He had done things unworthy of a Son, and being aſhamed of himſelf, would be glad to creep out of that baſe ſelf the Son, ſo he might be become a

good

good Servant. He was aſhamed to think he had been a Son, becauſe he had carried himſelf ſo vilely in that ſtate.

2. Shame is due to the folly which thoſe who ſin are guilty of. He which ſins reveals his folly ſufficiently in this, that either he underſtands not his Intereſt, or ſlights thoſe things which are of greateſt import to him; and therefore Fool is the proper name of a ſinner in Holy Language. For what good reaſon that Title is beſtowed upon him, you may ſee in theſe four particulars.

1. He which ſins thinks to be happy in a better way than that which God hath directed him to, and is ſo ſilly as not to underſtand the

the meanneſs of theſe things for which he forſakes his God, and the ſad Conſequences of his Diſobedience. How great is the diſproportion which is between the pure joy which flows into the ſoul from the ſenſe of Gods favour, and the muddy pleaſure which in any Channel whatſoever can be deriv'd from ſin? It is but little, and very impure, mixed with dreadful Allays. This is ſo great a ſtupidity, that the Prophet brings in the Heavens as wondring at it. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye Heavens at this, and be ye horribly afraid, ſaith the Lord, for my people have committed two evils; they have forſaken me the Fountain of Living Waters, and hewed them out Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns, which can hold*

Jer. 2. 12, 13.

hold no water. 'Tis true it was applyed, principally to their forſaking the living God, to ſerve dead Idols; *Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which yet are no Gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.* v. 11. It was a ſtrange Impudence in thoſe wicked Jews of whom this Prophet ſpeaks, who when they were in a bad Condition, made ſuch by their ſins, would mend it by their ſins. They were in captivity becauſe of their wickedneſs, and in particular for Idolatry, and were told ſo by the Prophet; *Jer.* 44. See what uſe they made of it, *We will burn Incenſe to the Queen of Heaven, and pour out drink-offerings to her, as did our Fathers, who were then well, and had plenty* v. 17.

of

of all things— Lyars! They were now in Famine for that Diſobedience, and yet ſaid, we will do what hath come into our minds; when as all the Proſperity which they enjoyed before, was from obſerving Gods Commands; and they bereav'd themſelves of it now by forſaking God, as the Prophet told them before, that they procured this to themſelves, in that they forſook the Lord their God: And that their own wickedneſs ſhould correct them, and make them know that it was an evil thing and bitter that they had forſaken God, and that the fear of diſpleaſing him was not in them; and that it ſhould enter into their heart, *i. e.* to gnaw it, when they

Jer. 2. 17, 19.

they conſidered what they had done. What leſs folly are they guilty of, who forſake the peace of Conſcience and hope of Immortality, and pleaſures of Divine Favour, for the embraces of an Harlot, voluptuous Riots, unjuſt Gain, or for all that Good that any, or all ſorts of ſin can bring in exchange? When they come to themſelves, as it was ſaid of the Prodigal (for a ſinner is out of his wits) they ſay to themſelves as the Apoſtle did to the *Romans*, *What profit have we of thoſe things which now only produce ſhame in our ſouls?* Or as that great Souldier when he ſaw the folly of his baſe Condeſcenſion, in the ſad Conſequences of it, Ὦ Θεὸς ὡς σμικρᾶς ἡδονῆς

ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα ἐκ Βασιλέως δοῦλον ἐμαυτὸν πεποίηκα; So the Prodigal, I have left the bread, and all good entertainments of my Fathers houſe, to feed upon Husks with Swine. I have of a Freeman made my ſelf a ſlave to Corruption. When *David*, not weighing things in the Balance of the Sanctuary, *i. e.* eſteeming them as God doth, according to the true worth, did undervalue the happineſs of good men, becauſe they wanted that proſperity which he ſaw ſome wicked men enjoy; when he came to conſider better, how did he condemn the folly of his former thoughts in theſe words,

Pſ. 73. 22. —*So fooliſh was I and ignorant, I was as a Beaſt before thee. But as*

I have none in Heaven but thee, ſo in Earth there is nothing that I can deſire in compariſon of thee. Thy favour is better than life, or any thing in it. This was the folly of the firſt ſinners, they would mend the eſtate God had put them in, by following their own counſels, and ſo for the ſlight and ſhort pleaſure which they had in eating forbidden fruit, loſt the joy of Divine Favour, and the peace of their own Conſciences, and flung themſelves into ſhame and fear. Pſ. 63.2.

Art not thou aſhamed whoever thou art which conſents to ſin, to throw thy ſelf out of the joy of thy ſoul, a ſerene tranquillity of mind, into melancholy and grief, when thou ſeeſt how by ſin thou haſt debaſed

baſed thy ſelf, loſt thy honour, and deveſted thy ſelf of the Dignity and Pleaſure of Vertue for ſome mean ſatisfaction of bodily Appetite, and indulging ſome vile Affection?

2. The folly of Sin appears more; he which diſobeys God will tranſgreſs his Laws, and go beyond the bounds which God hath ſet, though they lay no curb upon Appetite, nor ſtop the courſe of Action be to preſerve us from that miſchief, into which we ſhall fall if we go farther than they permit. A madman will on, though you ſtop him only upon the top of a Precipice. Is not the pleaſure of ſingle Life enough with Chaſtity and Divine Love? or if Nature re-

requires another ſtate; are not the modeſt allowances of Marriage enough, without the unclean pleaſures of forbidden Beds? Is not the ſatisfaction of eating and drinking to a temperate chearfulneſs, much better than to be drown'd in exceſs of Wine, and choked with Gluttony and Surfets? Is not a competency of worldly Means ſutable to the neceſſities of our Condition, and number of our Relatives thankfully enjoy'd, better than the tormenting content of a ravenous Temper, which makes the man haunted with it, always to endeavour to add Houſe to Houſe, Land to Land, and to encreaſe his Heap with unjuſt Actions, as well as greedy Deſires?

When the Fool, which makes a mock of ſin, comes to himſelf, and is made to ſee what he hath done, his countenance will fall, as it was ſaid of *Cain*, and he will be aſhamed to have parted with the ſprightly, erect temper of his Soul, which with Innocence he had in the favour of God, when by ſin he finds himſelf depreſſed, grieved, undone. *Sampſon* broke the Law of his God, which as a Nazarite he had upon him, and ſuffered a Harlot to cut off his Hair, but when he went out to ſhake himſelf, as he ſaid, and found the Spirit of God departed from him, what horrour with ſhame, with deſpondence of Soul, ſeiz'd upon him?

3. The

3. The folly of a ſinner appears alſo in this, that he is not ſenſible of the great danger which his ſin leads him into; no, though he hath been often told of it. See this point of Folly in a few Particulars.

1. He minds not that an action once done cannot be recalled, and that therefore ſin once committed cannot be undone, *Non eſt nunquam omnino feciſſe, facere ceſſaſſe*, He which ſins makes himſelf guilty.

2. He acts as ſuppoſing that he may be happy without the Divine Favour, or may diſobey and not loſe it; as if God could ſtand Neuter among men in the World, and did not impartially weigh the

actions of men, and were not *of purer eyes than to behold Iniquity.* But the Fool ſins on, neither minding the threatnings which are annexed to the Laws which he breaks, nor conſidering that he who made thoſe threatnings is Almighty, and ſo can both put them in execution, and appoint ſuch puniſhments as we can neither imagine nor endure.

3. The ſottiſhneſs of the ſecurity appears more plainly, becauſe God hath declared that he hath *appointed a day wherein he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs.* Is thy heart ſet to do evil, *becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily?* Shall a Malefactor think himſelf well, becauſe he is not

Act. 17. 31

not hanged as ſoon as condemned, when the Judge hath ſet a day for his Execution? Alas! what ſmall ſecurity is in that ſhort reſpite? Doſt thou not know that the goodneſs of God leads thee to Repentance, and yet wilt ſin, and ſo treaſure up wrath to thy ſelf, by hardneſs of heart, againſt the day of the Revelation of Gods juſt Judgment? The Fool puts the Evil day far from him, which how near it is, God only knows.

4. This is alſo one addition to this folly, that he will ſin when he hath been told not only that there is a ſet Day of Judgment, and conſequently of Puniſhment, though delayed a while; but alſo that a ſinner, by a courſe of im-

penitence, may be ſhut up in a ſtate inevitably obnoxious to the puniſhment of that Day, a long while before the perſon dies, and ſo comes to his particular Judgment. One may ſo much grieve the Lord, as the Iſraelites did in the Wilderneſs, that he will *ſwear they ſhall never enter into his reſt*— They may ſin ſo long that no place is left for Repentance, and ſo no hope of Mercy. It is a dreadful curſe when God ſaith, *Let them fall from one wickedneſs to another*, that ſo often, and the ſins ſo great, that they *never come into his Righteouſneſs*. Gray hairs are upon the fooliſh ſinner, and he perceives not that he grows old in ſin and guilt. *My Spirit ſhall not always*

ſtrive

ſtrive with men. *Pharaoh* having hardned his heart againſt ſeveral miraculous Declarations of Gods Power and Anger, was irrecoverably deſtinated to Ruin, though God told him that he preſerved him a while to ſhow his power and anger upon him, before he utterly deſtroyed him. The ſins *of the Amorites were not at the full.* Who knows whether he hath filled up the meaſure which God will ſtop at? yet fond ſinners add to it daily. When our gracious Saviour perceived *Jeruſalem* to be in this caſe, he wept over it, and ſaid, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how oft would I have gathered thee! O that thou hadſt in this thy day ſeen the things which belong to thy peace,*

Exod.

Gen. 15.

but now they are hid from thine eyes. We know that men by ſin may grow ſo ſtupid, as to their minds, that they will pray for life to that which is dead: and as to their Affections, they may be given up to thoſe which are ſo vile, as that it is a ſhame to mention them; and grow ſo baſe that they will ſell Heaven, as *Eſau* did his Birthright for a Meſs of Pottage. I have heard of a man, who having been drunk overnight, and paſſed over a very narrow Bridge, which no ſober Horſman durſt attempt, being brought the next day to ſee what danger he went through, fell down in a ſwoon upon the ſight of it. But ſinners are ſo beſotted with the love of ſin, that they will

will on, though they are ſhewed before that the Bridge they are going to is impaſſable, and that the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone is under it.

This is enough to have ſhown the folly of ſin, which whoſoever is guilty of, when he conſiders it, will find reaſon enough to be aſhamed of himſelf.

3. The third conſideration in this matter is that high Injuſtice of which he makes himſelf guilty that ſins. There is nothing in the world ſo due to any perſon, as Obedience is to God. That which is made by another, ought to receive Law from him. There is nothing more abſurd in Nature, than for a Creature to be its own Lord,

This was the Root upon which the miſery of Mankind grew at firſt, that they would be *ſui juris*, their own Law-givers: and ſo it is ſtill, he which ſins knows no Rules but his own Appetites, and this he declares in his Actions. And ſometimes it comes to that boldneſs that he ſays ſo in words too, as
Pſ. 12.4. thoſe Miſcreants, *Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* Monſtrous abſurd! It is not ſo unjuſt or ſhameful for Lacqueys to ride on Horſeback, and Princes to attend them on foot, as for a Creature to think to be at its own diſpoſe, and to ſpeak and do what it will. No, ſaid thoſe pious ſouls
James. who underſtood their eſtate, *thou haſt made us, and not we our ſelves.*

And

And therefore, as the Apoſtle adds, we ſhould ſo ſpeak, and ſo do, as thoſe who ſhall be judged by the Creators Law, and give an accompt to him who will paſs a ſevere ſentence upon the injuſtice of Diſobedience.

Men are mightily concerned for their own dues, and take it ill if any deprive them of their Right. Shall not the God of heaven and earth regard what is due to him by a Right which is tranſcendent to all created propriety? See what notice God takes of his wrongs, *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter. If then I be a Father, where is mine Honour? If I be a Maſter, where is my fear?* Art not thou aſhamed, who art by Mal. 1.6.

nature

nature but a Servant, to deny the homage which is due to the Soveraign Lord of the World, and yet art very careful of thoſe petty Rights which are only due to thee by his appointment? Doſt thou think it a ſhame for Creatures to do unjuſtly to one another, and yet doſt not bluſh to wrong thy God? This is ſo ſtrange a thing in Gods accompt, that as the Prophet *Malachi* tells us God wonders at it; *Will a man rob God?* It is moſt unlikely; *yet you have robbed me.* God had beſtowed the Land of *Canaan* upon them, but reſerved to himſelf, as Lord Proprietor, ſeveral Tithes and Offerings which he would have paid to him, as an Acknowledgment of himſelf, of whom

Mal. 3. 8, 9.

whom they held what they enjoyed. They pay'd not theſe Dues. But God doth not care for it poſſibly. Doth he not? See what follows; *Ye are curs'd with a dreadful curſe, becauſe you have robbed me, even this whole Nation.*

He which truly repents, turns with ſhame for the wrong which he hath done to his God, and bluſhes as a penitent Thief when he brings back ſtollen goods. *As a Thief is aſhamed when he is found, ſo is the Houſe of Iſrael.* And ſo we read in the Confeſſions of thoſe good men which prayed to God for 'em, when they made their Repentance publick, they were aſhamed and confounded when they conſidered the wrongs which they *Jer. 2. 26.*

they had done to God. *To thee, O Lord, belongs Righteouſneſs, but to us ſhame and confuſion of face:* to us, not only the men of *Judah*, and Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, but to our Kings and Princes, *becauſe we have ſinned againſt thee.* So *Ezra* and others.

Dan. 9. 7, 8.

4. This ſhame is heightened by this, in that he which ſins againſt God is guilty of moſt hainous Ingratitude. He which ſins offends his moſt good God, abuſeth his beſt Friend. Doſt not thou who ſinneſt, ſlight him in whom thou liveſt, moveſt, and haſt thy being, affront him who hath fed and clothed thee all thy days? This Ingratitude is ſo great an aggravation of the baſe-

neſs

neſs of ſin, that the Prophet *Iſaiah* aſtoniſhed at it, cries out in Gods behalf, *Hear O Heavens, give ear O Earth*; why, whats the matter? *I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have rebelled againſt me.* Why, is that ſuch a matter that God ſhould reſent it on that faſhion? Yes. For as it follows, it is a vileneſs ſo low that Beaſts are not capable of it; *The Ox knows his owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib:* and as they come for meat to their Maſters, ſo they ſerve in grateful return for what they receive. *But Iſrael doth not know, my people doth not conſider.* They neither have a ſenſe of me their God, nor of the Favours they have received from me, nor conſi- *Iſa.* 1. 2, 3.

der

der the Obligation which is upon them to obey me, nor how ungrateful they are in not obeying, nor the baſeneſs of their Ingratitude whilſt they diſobey. So *Jeremiah*, *Have I been a wilderneſs to Iſrael, or a land of darkneſs, that they ſay we are Lords, we will come no more at thee?* I thought I had been to them that Fountain of goodneſs at which they drank all their days. I thought that by the conſtant Irrigations of Mercy I had made their ſouls like a watered garden. But it was true of them which was ſaid of *Hezekiah*, *He returned not as he received*, neither for his recovery from a deadly Sickneſs, nor deliverance from the potent Army of the *Aſſyrians*.

Jer. 2. 31.

2 *Chron.* 32. 25.

There-

Therefore the Penitent hath good reaſon to ſay, I am aſhamed, O Lord, I bluſh to think how many mercies I ſlight, how many obligations I trample upon, how baſely unthankful I have been. Doth *Jeſurun* kick, and forget it was undeſerved mercy which made him fat? Becauſe thou art full doſt thou ſin, and not remember that thou rebelleſt againſt him who fed thee? *O fooliſh people and unwiſe, do you thus requite the Lord?* Or as the Prophet, Doſt thou not know that I gave thee thy Corn and Wine, ſaith God, and that I multiplyed thy ſilver and thy gold? I will return and take away my corn, wine, and wooll, and make thee know with what ingratitude

Deut. 32. 6.

Hoſ. 2. 8, 9.

thou haſt forgot thy Benefactor and chief Patron.

The Penitent may do well to increaſe this ſhame in his ſoul, by the conſideration of ſome of the chief mercies by which God hath laid Obligations of Obedience upon him; and that will make him ſay with *Ezra*—*Have I ſinned, having received ſuch deliverance as this? —Was I delivered to do abominations? O my God, I am aſhamed to look up to Heaven—I bluſh and hide my face.*

And to all conſiderations of Ingratitude add always this, never to be forgotten, the Love of thy Saviour in dying for thy ſins, and then thou wilt ſay, Do I pleaſe my ſelf with committing ſin, when my

my Saviour in pure love ſuffered ſo much pain with infinite amazements upon the Croſs for it? What am I ſo baſe as to trample under my feet the Blood of the Son of God, and to ſcorn the prayers and tears of my Saviour? Thoſe whom this conſideration doth not make aſhamed now, will be confounded with it for ever hereafter, and beg Rocks to fall upon them, that they may not come into the preſence of that Friend whom they have ſo vilely abuſed; not only becauſe they ſee him now ſo great that he can take vengeance upon them, but becauſe they perceive themſelves ſo baſe by Ingratitude, that they highly deſerve it.

5. Laſtly, The Penitent hath great reaſon to be aſhamed of ſin, as for the aforementioned Conſiderations, ſo for this that he hath made them out of meaſure ſinful by a horrid Perfidiouſneſs. He which ſins at firſt breaks the ὅρκος ἐνσωμάτος, the Oath which is interwoven with our being, of which the Philoſopher ſpoke; God making no Creature but of which he takes an Oath, by the Law of its Nature, that it ſhall be obedient to him: But he is perfidious alſo, becauſe he breaks thoſe voluntary Promiſes which the ſenſe of Obligations laid upon him, engaged him to make to God. Sure this will make the Penitent bluſh, when he finds reaſon to ſay to his ſoul,

O

O my ſoul! Art not thou only ſo vile as to conſent to ſin againſt God, but alſo to do it when thou haſt vowed not to do ſo? and when thoſe Vows were made upon moſt ſerious deliberation, and for thoſe Reaſons which thou doſt ſtill acknowledge to be moſt weighty?

This is enough to have ſaid to ſhew, not only how neceſſary Confeſſion of ſin is to Repentance, but alſo how fit it is that ſorrow and ſhame for ſin committed ſhould be joyned to the Confeſſion of it. Yet this muſt not be underſtood ſo, as if they were only applicable to ſome penitential ſolemn acts of Confeſſion; for they are to be continued through our

whole life: For a good man will always be ſorry, and ever aſhamed that he had once ſinned. Though God forgive, a true Penitent will hardly forgive himſelf. A Heathen could ſay, That if we believe there is a Providence, he which hath ſinned ſhall not be deſpiſed if he grow good; Κᾆν παλαιῶν μνημάτων ἐφέλκηται σήματα, yet he ſhall carry ſome marks of old diſpleaſure: For as another ſaid, Μένουσιν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν μετανοούντων ὕλαι καὶ τόποι τῶν ἀρχαίων ἁμαρτημάτων, there remains in the ſouls of Penitents the marks of old ſins, as ſkars do in the fleſh, though the wounds be healed.

2. To Confeſſion the Penitent muſt add earneſt Prayer for pardon. This we learn from our bleſſed Saviour, who hath taught us to put this into our Prayers, as a chief petition,—*Forgive us our Treſpaſſes.* Shall God forgive ſuch as do not entreat him to do ſo? It is fit the ſinner ſhould fall upon his knees before the Eternal Father, and beg pardon. When *Daniel* underſtood by reading the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the time was at hand in which God had promiſed ſo to pardon the ſins of the Jews, as to return their captivity, then he ſet himſelf to *ſeek it of God by ſupplication and prayer.* Dan 9. 2,3. Why ſo? Becauſe the promiſe was made upon condition that they

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ſhould repent of their ſins which carried them captive, and pray for pardon and return: For ſo we read, *I will plant that which was deſolate. and build the ruinous places—I will yet for this be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them*; *i. e.* I will grant it to them when they pray for it. Hereupon this holy man began in prayer to do his part, and directed them to do theirs.

Ezek. 36. 37.

But as Prayer for Pardon is a Duty unqueſtionable, ſo Fervency is a qualification ſo requiſite, that without it Prayer will not be accepted, as it appears by what our Saviour hath taught us in his Sermons, the Apoſtles in their Epiſtles, ſincere Penitents in their practiſe,

practiſe, and of which we are aſſured, becauſe it hath ever been made a condition of the Forgiveneſs promiſed.

It is uſually expreſſed thus, They ſhall find me if they ſeek me with their whole heart: Accordingly they are ſaid to have ſought God *with their whole deſire.* We read of the Prayer of Faith ſaving the ſick, and obtaining forgiveneſs of ſins; but the reaſon given in the next verſe, ſhows what kind of Prayer it muſt be, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*; Δέησις ἐνεργουμένη. The word ſignifies high, and therefore Tranſlators uſe two to expreſs the meaning of it. No doubt rightly; For the Apoſtle intended ſuch

2 Chron. 15. 15.

James 5. 5.

v. 16.

ſuch prayer as in which the moſt lively working of the ſoul expreſſeth it ſelf. The ſame word St. *Paul* uſed, ſpeaking of Faith which ſaves, where he ſays that it is δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, *i. e.* which ſhows its vertue in a powerful operation, and ſo is all one with ἐνεργὴς, as appears by two other places in his Epiſtles put together: For when he ſays of the Word of God, that it is ἐνεργούμενος, he ſays it is ἐνεργὴς, quick and powerful in working. This is enough to ſhow the meaning of the word; now to apply it to our purpoſe. If ſuch a fervency of ſoul was requiſite when a righteous man prayed for the forgiveneſs of other mens ſins, what is re-

Gal. 5.6.

1 Thess. 2.13.

Heb. 4.12.

quiſite when an unrighteous man prays for the pardon of his own? Sure he needs to do as St. *James* ſaith, προσευχῇ προσεύχεσθαι, to pray very earneſtly; vehemency being uſually ſignified in Hebrew by the gemination or joyning the Verb with the Noun. *James* 17.

The truth is, he which beggs forgiveneſs of God in a languid Prayer, doth declare plainly that he neither minds to whom he prays, nor for what: He which intreats God to forgive him his ſins, and underſtands how great a thing he aſks, and is ſenſible in what need he ſtands of it, and withal how unworthy he is to receive it, and conſiders the greatneſs of the Perſon of whom he begs it, and how much

much goodneſs that is which will beſtow it, and conſequently how high a favour it muſt be if he receive it, will pray with all poſſible earneſtneſs for it. It is not fit to put up any cold petition to God, much leſs when we beg ſo great a matter. How earneſtly would a condemned man beg his life of the Judge, if he might have it for aſking; or but hope by entreaty to revoke the ſentence paſſed againſt him? St. *Paul* uſeth another expreſſion, well ſignifying the ſame thing, ἀγωνίζεσθε ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, to ſtrive earneſtly in Pray-r, as *Jacob* did when he wreſtled with the Angel, and would not let him go till he bleſſed him.

Col 4.12.

When

When our bleſſed Saviour was in an Agony, *i. e.* in conflict with thoſe amazing horrours which the guilt of our ſins ſet before him, he is ſaid to have prayed often, and as that dreadful weight preſſed harder, he prayed more earneſtly, ἐκτενέστερον, extending, as I may ſay, all the power of his ſoul to its utmoſt compaſs; ſhewing the earneſt working of his ſoul after he had riſen from his knees, by throwing his holy Body upon the ground, lying proſtrate before the Eternal Father, as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, offering Supplications with ſtrong cries and tears to him who was able to ſave him, and was ſo delivered from his fear, Hear, O Penitent, was thy

thy Saviour ſo earneſt in his prayers in the conflict which he endured for the ſins of others, and art thou dull and flaccid in prayer for the pardon of thy own? Sure thou art not ſenſible what kind of thing Divine Wrath is, or doſt not believe that ſin brings with it an obligation to make the Offender ſuffer it? doſt thou think thy ſelf able to endure it? or it may be perſuadeſt thy ſelf that it may be eſcaped ſome other way? Awake, awake, O drouzy ſoul, and pray mightily to God that thy ſins may be forgiven thee, that thou mayſt not fall into the hands of the Living God, who is a conſuming fire; pray that thou mayſt be pardoned, and ſo not be thrown into everlaſting

verlasting burnings. If thou be'st unconcerned or lazy in this matter, thou art more prophane than *Esau*, who though he was vile enough in selling his Birth-right, yet when the Blessing was departed from him, he not only prayed for the reversion of the sentence by which it was done, *but sought it carefully with tears.*

Thus much will serve to have spoken of the first part of Repentance, which though it be necessary to be done, yet the second must be added to it. Having perfectly changed our minds as to what is past, and heartily begg'd pardon for it, we must be sure to have better care for the future. He which doth not the first, will never think

think of the ſecond ; and though he have done the former, if he proceed not to the latter , it will do him no good, it being no better than Corn in the blade which never comes to an Ear. As *Tertullian* ſaid well, *Quid enim ex Pœnitentia matureſcit niſi Emendationis fructus?* Repentance is fruitleſs except it bring forth a better life. Preſent penitence without future obedience are words which ſignifie nothing in Chriſtian Religion.

When *John* the Baptiſt did receive Diſciples upon profeſſion of Repentance, which they made by confeſſing their ſins to him, he bad them not think that this would reſtore them to the Divine Favour , ex-

except they brought forth fruits agreeable to that Profeſſion; that is, works correſpondent to it: and he aſſur'd them, that the Ax then laid to the Root of the Tree, would cut it down, if it did not bring forth thoſe fruits; and that fair Leaves ſhould not ſave it from being caſt into the fire. *Matt.* 3. 7, 8. *Acts* 26. 20.

Of this ſecond part of Repentance I ſhall ſpeak in this Method.

1. By ſhewing the true nature of after Care, and what is requiſite to make it acceptable.

2. By making Exhortation to this Duty, which I ſhall do only by theſe Motives, taken

1. From the Reaſonableneſs of Repentance in its own nature.

2. From the great Encouragement which we have to it from the goodneſs of God, who is willing to forgive ſinners if they repent.
3. From the great and inevitable miſchief which awaites thoſe who will not repent.

There are two things which will make our Repentance acceptable: our Return to God will always be ſo, if it be

1. Speedy.
2. Sincere.

1. The vileneſs of ſin is ſo great, as I ſhow'd before, that a Penitent

tent cannot reflect ſeriouſly upon it, but he muſt needs think it fit to undo it as ſoon as he can. This we ſee in St. *Peter*; as ſoon as he thought what he had done, he went preſently out *and wept bitterly*, endeavouring, as ſoon as poſſibly he might, to waſh away his ſin with tears. Excellent is the counſel which *Salvian* gives in this caſe, *Illico ubi concidere conſurgant & elevationem protinus meditentur in lapſu, ac ſi fieri ullo modo pernicitate pœnitudinis poteſt, tam velox ſit remedium reſurgentis, ut vix poſſit veſtigium apparere collapſi.* He which Repents quickly declares how willing he was not to have ſinned.

1. This is reaſonable; for no man is ſenſible of danger approach-

ing, but he will endeavour to prevent it as ſoon as he can, and he may delay ſo long that it will grow impoſſible. If a mans Houſe be on fire, will he not preſently endeavour to quench it? If he be bitten with a Serpent, doth he not ſeek for preſent remedy? He which is fallen into ſickneſs makes haſte to ſend for a Phyſician, every body knowing that recovery is then moſt to be hoped for, when proper Remedies are uſed in time. A Diſeaſe may prevail ſo far by neglect of thoſe Medicines which would have cured it at firſt, that neither they nor any other will be able to do it afterward. Delay in this affair makes the work grow harder. By repeating of ſin the Offender hardens

dens his heart; and though afterwards he turn Penitent, he will find his taſk more difficult, becauſe inſtead of a ſlighter diſpoſition, which he might have more eaſily conquered at firſt, he muſt now conflict with a firm habit. Shall he which cannot outgo a Footman hope to outrun Horſmen?

2. The demerit of ſin encreaſeth by delaying to return. Can he hope for mercy who hath ſtood out in rebellion to the laſt? He which delays to repent treaſures up wrath againſt himſelf, when as God knows, if his wrath be kindled but a little, there is no man able to endure it. It is ſtrange that any Conceit ſhould come into a mans Head that acknowledgeth his dependance

upon God, to make him defer his return to him by repentance. It is poſſibly this, He means at laſt to repent of his negligence. Doth he, and yet is deliberately negligent at preſent? It is a new ſort of Vertue this, to ſin pretending an intention to repent; and as odd a kind of wiſdom to abuſe infinite goodneſs in hope to find that favour, of which the courſe of life which we chuſe makes us infinitely unworthy, and being continued in will give us ſtrong reaſons to deſpair of when we dy.

3. Pardon is not to be had, no nor repentance, when we will. He who is ſo gracious, that he pleaſeth to pardon when we truly repent, hath not promiſed we ſhall have

grace

grace to repent when we pleaſe. We are adviſed in Holy Writ to *ſeek the Lord whilſt he may be found* : *Iſa.*5.5,6 and when that is we are told, *I love them that love me, and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me.* *Prov.*8. 17.

How applicable this is to the matter of Repentance, we may ſee by what is ſaid in the fifth and ſixth verſes of *Pſalm* 32. *David* was in great diſtreſs by reaſon of Divine Wrath, which lay upon him for his ſins; whereupon he took himſelf to repentance, ſpeedily bewailing, and openly confeſſing his Faith to to God, and ſo returning to his duty found pardon. *For this ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayeſt be found.* He that knows how great a matter

it is to be reconciled to an offended God, and that there is a time of finding mercy, which if it be ſlipt, the ſinner is eternally undone, will thereupon make what ſpeed he can to return to God, and humbly ſeek his favour in a ſeaſonable addreſs, leſt he loſe himſelf with the opportunity.

It is not many years ſince the Maſter of a Ship loitering aſhore, and not taking the advantage of one Tide when the Wind blew fair, with which other Ships went out, was forced by contrary Winds to ſtay in the Port till the forementioned Ships made their Voiage, and return'd. They are bold people, but extremely ſottiſh, who ſlight opportunities of doing that which be-

belongs to their chief good, when they know they cannot command the ſtay or return of ſuch ſeaſons. Doſt thou ſlight God in thy youthful health, when to have ſerved him early is the unſpeakable conſolation of old age, and which they who then want it would purchaſe with all the World, if they had it, upon their Death-bed? Is not old age burthen enough except it be plagued with the heavy remembrance of a wicked life? This hath made many to cry out with him in the Tragedy,

Οἴ μοι. Τί δὴ βροτοῖσιν οὐκ ἔςι τόδε, Νέους δὶς εἶναι, &c. *Euripid.*

Alas

Alas for me, that men may not grow younger twice, and as often old, that ſo I might in my after life correct what was not well done in the former part of it.

4. Though a man begin never ſo ſoon, this work of Repentance is not to be done of a ſudden: It will require great pains, and much time; and therefore none is to be loſt. Can ſin, which hath taken deep root in the ſoul, be drawn up at the firſt pull? Can our unwillingneſs to do it be mortified in a moment? Is a habit of ſin ſoon maſter'd? No; but as we have been longer in contracting it, and ſo making it ſtronger; it will not be conquered but by the contrary habit of Vertue, which requires time

time to be implanted, grow and get ſtrength in the ſoul. It may be that we have many Vices to overcome, and do we hope to do that preſently? We have committed many Errors, and can we repent of them all on a ſudden? We have many things to do, and thoſe not eaſie to one accuſtomed to ſin; We are to make our ſelves Veſſels meet for our Maſters uſe, but it will require time to do it, conſidering how we are put out of order by ſin; and therefore all poſſible ſpeed is neceſſary in the practiſe of Repentance.

2. As Repentance muſt be ſpeedy, ſo it muſt be ſincere; and that we ſhall find, if it anſwer thoſe deſcriptions of it which are given in holy

holy Scripture, vvhere it is called *The renewing of the mind*, *crucifying the old man and his deeds*, *putting off the body of ſin and deſtroying it*, *crucifying the fleſh with the affections and luſts*, *purging our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, *and perfecting holineſs in Gods fear*, *being made new creatures and partakers of a Divine Nature*, vvith many more expreſſions to the ſame purpoſe.

The Senſe of which is comprehended in theſe four Particulars.

1. Sincere Repentance begins in a change of the inward diſpoſition; for which Reaſon the true Convert is called *a new man*, as we learn from *Eph.* 4. and the alteration is ſo great, that it denominates the

the Penitent to be *a new Creature*; Gal. 6. which is not meant as to Tranſubſtantiation of Nature, but Emendation of Temper, making the Penitent not another perſon, but a better Man. A few Scriptures conſidered will make this ſo plain, that every one may know what it means, and judge himſelf accordingly. It conſiſts in two things,

1. In change of Apprehenſion.
2. In Alteration of Affection.

1. In change of Apprehenſion; he which is truly Penitent hath another ſenſe of things than he had before, which the Apoſtle calls re-

renewing in the ſpirit of the mind, by which he now underſtands the goodneſs of God, and perceives that to be perfect and moſt acceptable, of which he had but mean thoughts before. *The carnal mind perceives not the things of God, they are fooliſhneſs to him*; he underſtands no reaſon in them: but the true Penitent hath received another mind, is made ſpiritual, and ſo can diſcern them, and acknowledges that to be the chiefeſt wiſdom, which before he accounted extream folly. He which lives in ſin is ſo beſotted with carnal Luſt, that he can ſee no reaſon in Spiritual things; no more can a blind man judge of colours. The true Penitent thinks highly now of the fa-

favour of God, which he regarded not before; and counts all things droſs in compariſon of the knowledge of Chriſt, which he deſpiſed before; underſtands the Promiſes to be of infinite value, which he contemned before; he is convinced of the neceſſity of God's pardon, the excellency of Holineſs, the reaſonableneſs of vertue, and the neceſſary connexion which is between goodneſs and happineſs.

2. It conſiſts alſo in Alteration of Affections; for as he underſtands things better, ſo he is otherwiſe affected towards them: without this the former would be no proof of a ſincere change, but a ſign of hypocriſie, which a true Penitent doth

doth as paſſionately deſire to throw out of his ſoul, as he would caſt the Devil out of his Houſe, if it were poſſeſſed by him. Many Scriptures
Gal. 5. ſpeak this plain enough, *Thoſe who are Chriſts, have crucified the fleſh*
Eph. 4. 22 *with its affections and luſts— and have put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts.* The true Convert hath a *new heart, another ſpirit*, as it is called *Num.* 14. 24. The heart of ſtone is broke in pieces, and being caſt away, one of fleſh is put in the room of it; which is eaſily known, for by its ſoftneſs it receives impreſſions from thoſe things which before wrought nothing upon it. The Iron ſinew is broken, and the ſtiff neck made plia-

pliable, ſtoops to the yoke of Chriſt. Self-will is denied, and uncontrolled appetite paſſeth into a ſtate of mortification; the ſame mind beginning to be in the Convert which was in Chriſt Jeſus; he ſays with him, *Not my will, O Father, but thine be done:* That which pleaſeth thee ſhall pleaſe me. Greedy deſire ceaſeth, Covetouſneſs languiſhes, Pride is melted down into Humility, *Feroculum illud & petulcum animal cicuratur*, Inſolence and abuſive temper is alter'd into ſweetneſs and reſpect, Goatiſh laſciviouſneſs is changed into chaſtity of diſpoſition, Revenge turned into Forgiveneſs, Malice into Charity.

He which has repented ſincerely, will by this find his converſion not to be a vain pretenſe, becauſe he perceives Religion to have paſſed into his Nature, and the Goſpel become a principle of new life in his ſoul, and that by the ſincere entertainment of it there he contrarily ſays of himſelf, I am not I; *Ego non ſum ille Ego*, I am not that I which I was before: He is another man, a new Creature, a man now after Gods Heart: He is now a Sacrifice acceptable to God, becauſe he is ſalted with fire, that is, the vigour of the holy Goſpel hath eaten out the Impurity of his Affections, and like a Divine Salt dried up thoſe corruptions which putrifie the ſoul.

2. The

2. The ſincerity of Repentance declares it ſelf in outward expreſſions agreeable to the inward change, and makes the courſe of life anſwerable to the temper of heart. The Scripture tells us of *newneſs of life* as well as of the *new man*. The Baptiſt told his Proſelytes this ſame thing, when he bad them *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*; Mat. 3. that is, to do works agreeable to the nature of the thing it ſelf and the profeſſion of it. The ſincere Penitent brings forth ſuch fruits, as demonſtrate the Doctrines of the Goſpel like living Roots to have been implanted in his heart; *i. e.* he performs ſuch actions as flow properly from vertuous Diſpoſitions and Habits. This

the Apoſtle told the *Galatians* in other words, *If you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit— If you live*— i. e. have made the truth of the Goſpel the principle of your life—*walk in the Spirit*; i. e. live according to them, and let the power of heavenly Doctrine ſhine forth in the beauty of holy Converſation. The Penitent now acknowledges Chriſt for his Maſter; but to little purpoſe, except he do what he commands him.

Gal. 5. 25.

Without a true change of ſoul a man pretending to ſome acts of Religion, is like a dead Tree, unto which ſome branches of Fruit are tied; and if he pretend to have a living Root, but brings not forth anſwerable fruits, he may make a plau-

plauſible ſhow, becauſe poſſibly adorn'd with green leaves; but the Tree is ſuch as our Saviour will cut down, and caſt out of his Garden. Our Saviour hath given but one Rule, and they will do fooliſhly that go about to make another to know the goodneſs of a Tree by, and that is the fruit of it; *For a good Tree bringeth forth good fruits.* Matt. 7: 16. He doth not ſay that the Tree which is bad now, may not be made good, and then bring forth good fruits, for that it may; but that ſo long as it brings forth corrupt fruits it is bad. Moſt are ready to allow this Rule when they make a Judgment of others; but doth it not hold as well when they apply it to themſelves? Yes; and therefore

1 Joh. 3. 7. St. *John* ſaid well, *Little Children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous. Let no man deceive you*— Why, were any in danger in that point? Yes, many did then, as they do ſtill, flatter themſelves that a good heart to God, as they call it, and ſome certain deſire of living well, will be ſufficient to their Salvation: No, ſaith the Apoſtle, *He that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous*: He that will be accepted of God muſt do righteouſneſs, preſent to God an obedient Faith, by which of old, as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, *they wrought righteouſneſs: as he*, that is Chriſt, *was righteous*, and ſo was accepted of his Father; becauſe, as he ſaid him-

Joh. 8. 29.

himſelf, *He always did thoſe things which pleaſed him.* He who vvill aſſure himſelf of his ſincerity, muſt make no nevv Rules to judge of it, but keep true to the old one, and not reſt ſatisfied that he knovvs his Duty, and approves of the Divine Will, or that he hath ſome deſires to be obedient; No, he muſt truly perform the actions vvhich agree vvith Goſpel Principles and Lavvs, ſtill remembring that of our Saviour, vvho is alſo our Judge, *If you know theſe things, happy are you if you do them.* *Joh.* 13. 17.

3. When you have got ſo far, and find the ſtate of your ſoul right in the forementioned Particulars, then remember that you muſt make your conformity to the aforeſaid

Rules univerſal, and your Obedience uniform to all the parts of the Goſpel. If your Obedience be partial, you vvill find nothing vvithin or vvithout that vvill keep you from being at a loſs, as to the proof of your ſincerity. If it be neceſſary to forſake ſin, it is neceſſary to forſake all ſin.

It vvas the Prayer of the Pſalmiſt, *That he might be found in Gods Statutes, and ſo not be aſhamed.* Hovv did he hope to attain this? He tells us, *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed*, then I ſhall be ſound, vvhen *I have reſpect to all thy Commandments.* Then I ſhall have confidence that I am a ſincere Servant of God, when I indulge no ſin, vvhen I devote my ſoul to entire Obedience, and knovv-

Pſ. 119. 18

v. 6.

knovvingly diſregard no Law of his.

This cannot be more clearly repreſented, than by that vvhich St. *James* hath ſaid concerning this matter, *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.* If any ſay, Hovv can vve keep the vvhole, and fail in part, vvhen the vvhole includes all the parts? They may eaſily perceive that the Apoſtle means, Whoſoever keeps the greater part, and fails in ſome particular, diſobeys ſome Lavv of Chriſt, is guilty of all; by ſinning vvilfully againſt one, he is guilty of all; *i.e.* he vvhich ſincerely reſpects the Authority of the Lavv-giver, vvill ſhovv it in obedience to his vvhole Lavv; for he *James* 2. 10.

he vvhich ſlights it in one, is guilty of the breach of the reſt, inaſmuch as he contemns the Authority vvhich gave them all. That this is his meaning vve are taught by verſe 11. vvhich ſays thus, *For he which ſaid, Do not commit Adultery, ſaid alſo, do not kill: Now if thou commit no Adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a Tranſgreſſor of the Law*; and ſo art guilty of the breach of all, *i.e.* ſhall be as liable to Condemnation, as if thou hadſt ſinned againſt all: Neither ſhall Obedience performed to ſome Lavvs ſave thee from the puniſhment vvhich is due to the breach of others. He vvhich ſerves a Prince in many things, and yet offends againſt ſome Capital Lavv, vvill not find

find his partial obedience ſave him from the ſentence of puniſhment which ſhall be paſſed upon him for that.

To this I may add that excellent ſaying of our Saviour to the Phariſees, when they pretended to be worthy of acceptation, becauſe they had been very obſervant of ſome things, though they neglected others; How! ſaith our Saviour, *Theſe indeed you ought to have done, no doubt of it; but alſo you ought not to have left the other undone.* And ſince they pretended to obedience, for all this, *Fools that you are*, ſaith our Saviour, *did not he which made that which is without, make that which is within?* You pretend to pleaſe God with obedience,

Luk. 11. 42.

v. 40.

dience, you ſhould do ſo; for he is the ſupream Law-giver; What then, will you do it with partial obedience? Doth he expect that all his Laws ſhould be obey'd, or doth he give you leave to pick and chuſe? Did not God, the great Former of all things, who made the inſide and outſide, expect that you ſhould be pure in ſoul and body? Do you think that external waſhings purifie the ſoul? You are as fooliſh in theſe thoughts, as he ſhould be who thinks a Cup is clean, when only the outſide is waſhed. Will any man drink in ſuch a Cup? You pleaſe God indeed with your Obedience, when by ſinning in ſome thing or other you plainly affront him. He which thinks

thinks to be accepted of God for that partial regard ſhow'd to ſome of his Precepts, when he ſlights others, can no more obtain it, than a Lutoniſt can give content to ſuch as have Muſical ears, when ſome Strings of the Inſtrument upon which he plays are out of Tune.

4. Sincerity muſt continue to approve it ſelf ſuch by perſeverance. This I ſhall explain as I find it expreſſed in two or three places of Sripture: —*I will hear what God will ſpeak to his ſervants, begging mercy of him*: and what doth he ſay? *He will ſpeak peace to his people*; he will receive their prayers, and pardon their ſins, if they repent ſincerely of them: —*but let them not return to folly*— This he requires

Pſ. 85. 8. *v.* 7.

requires as a Condition of their Forgiveneſs, that they do *not return to folly*, which I have ſufficiently demonſtrated ſin to be; they muſt not relapſe into their former courſes, which if they ſhould, they will add to their former ſottiſhneſs, and inſtead of approving themſelves ſincere Penitents, ſhow that they are moſt ſtupid Fools and vile Hypocrites.

When our Saviour healed the Paralytick, he bad him *ſin no more*; and knowing by his Divine Wiſdom what he had done 38 years before, which occaſioned his weakneſs, bad him take heed of doing any ſuch thing again; aſſuring him, if he did, that he ſhould be worſe puniſhed, as a Contemner of

Joh. 5. 14.

of the pardon now beſtowed. So when the ſame merciful Jeſus forgave a very bad woman a ſin great enough, he diſmiſſed her not careleſly, but with this ſevere Injunction added, That ſhe ſhould make her Repentance ſincere by *ſinning no more.* He did not ſay, Go, go, thy Accuſers are as bad as thy ſelf, live as thou wilt, I accept thy Repentance, I will ſave thee from puniſhment now and hereafter: No; but charged her to be ſincere in her Repentance; and as a Teſtimony of it, to *ſin no more.* By theſe Inſtances we may ſee what our Saviour takes for a proof of ſincerity, and it ſeems that he expects it of all; for he preſcribed the ſame method, without alteration, to both. *Joh.* 8. 11.

A ſincere Penitent is one that knows ſin to be ſo baſe a thing, that nothing but Infinite Goodneſs can forgive it; and is ſo ſenſible of the vile ſtain which it leaves upon his ſoul, that he would, if he could, waſh it off with Tears of Blood; and can he eaſily go and commit it again? He is convinced that the ſame wickedneſs and danger is in it, though ſet off with an agreeable Tentation, as was before in it, when his Conſcience was gall'd with reflexion upon the commiſſion of it; and knows that he hath as much need to ſin no more, after he hath repented of it, as he had to vow he would not when he did repent. Can Damnation be made plauſible in any dreſs? Will any man

man drink Poiſon, becauſe he ſees it ſweetned with a great quantity of Sugar ?

The ancient Fathers in their pious Diſcourſes concerning Repentance did uſually inveigh againſt thoſe which they called ἐπάλληλοι καὶ ζωυχεῖς μετάνοιαι and rejected thoſe Penitents, who ſinning and repenting, but repenting and ſinning ſtill, checked their life all along with one and the other; and affirm'd, that ſuch Converts differ'd nothing from lame Unbelievers, except in this, that thoſe falſe Penitents knew they ſinn'd, and ſo were worſe; and pronounced peremptorily that thoſe who ſinned, pretended to be ſorry, but ſinned ſtill, had only a vain ſhow

of Repentance; and that the true Penitent had ſuch a ſenſe of the nature of ſin, that he abhor'd to commit it any more. The Author to the *Hebrews* calls it *Repentance from dead works*; of which words what St. *Chryſoſtom* ſaid is a very good Expoſition, He which repents ὑπὲρ τ αὐτ ἁπλῶς πραγμάτων ἐφ' οἷς μετενόησεν. *Lactantius lib.* 6. ſaid, *That to repent is to profeſs and affirm that we will ſin no more.*

Tom. 6. *Orat.* 19.

Eccluſ. 34. 25, 26.

The Son of *Sirach* tells us what ſenſe of old the Church of God had concerning the contrary ſort of Repentance, in theſe words, *If a man waſh himſelf from the dead, and toucheth it again, what good ſhall that waſhing do him?* The Jews having touched

touched any dead body, were unclean by the Law given *Num.*19.11. and they were commanded to take it off by *water of Purification*, as it is called; but if they had washed, and touched it again, what good would that washing do? So he *that repents and fasts too*, as they did in the days of solemn Humiliation, and then goes *and does the same things again, who will hear his prayer? and what good shall his humiliation do him?* He which bewails what is passed, and hath no care to mend for future, deplores his sin, and commits it again, is like one who washeth an unburnt Brick, the more water he pours on the fowler it is. It was the saying of an ancient Writer, and what he said

was warranted by one ancienter than he, St. *Peter*, who in his ſecond Epiſtle hath defined, that it is *better never to have known the way of Righteouſneſs*, which is the Goſpel, *than having known it to turn from it*. And he there compares that Repentance, which keeps not a man from returning to ſin, to the *Dogs returning to his Vomit*, and *the waſhed Sows tumbling again in the next mire*.

2 *Pet* 2. 21, 22.

I ſhall cloſe this with thoſe words of our Saviour, which he ſpake to ſuch as believed on him, that they might aſſure themſelves, and not miſtake for what they ſaw in themſelves at preſent—*If you continue in my words*, *i.e.* the obedience of my Doctrine, *you ſhall be my Diſciples indeed*.

Joh. 8. 31.

If

If that which hath been ſaid concerning Sincerity happen to raiſe doubts in any ſoul concerning his eſtate, and he begins to ſay, That either the Conditions of Salvation are very hard, or I am no true Chriſtian. I muſt anſwer, That if thoſe things which I have ſaid were not true, Chriſts Goſpel would not be that which it moſt certainly is, the Myſtery of Godlineſs, *i. e.* the Doctrine of Holineſs; and that it cannot be denied, but that Chriſt doth accept his Servants to mercy, though they do not perform perfect unſinning Obedience: therefore I would ſpeak ſomething more to determine this matter, ſo as not to encourage Hypocriſie, which is confeſſedly the

worſt of ſins, nor yet to diſcourage any that is ſincere, becauſe he is not perfect. Therefore I will ſhow what God requires of us, and what he will accoount ſincerity. I will give the Meaſures of it in five Particulars, which I will endeavour to adjuſt according to the ſtandard of the Sanctuary, the Infallible Rule, which is the Word of God.

1. The Goſpel requires great honeſty of Intention, and ſimplicity of heart in our Return to God. So
Jer. 24. 7. the Prophet of his Penitents, *I will be their God, for they ſhall return to me with their whole heart*, having taken it quite off from their former Idolatries, and the Indulgence which they had for their

old

old ſins. It was ſaid of the Tribe of *Zabulon*, who came to reſtore *David* to his Throne, that they were *not of a double heart*; pretending outwardly great love to *David*, but hankering in their minds to the Houſe of *Saul*. Juſt as the Iſraelites ſet their faces towards the Holy Land, and journeyed towards it, but in their hearts turned back to *Egypt*. They kept the ſteme of the Fleſh-pots in their phanſies, and had the relliſh of the Onions in their memories, and long'd after them; and ſo went not toward the promiſed Land with a full heart, but would have been glad of an opportunity to have return'd to *Egypt*. So I remember the *Philiſtines* Cows went when they car- 1 *Chron.* 12. 33.

ried the Ark to *Bethſhemeſh*; they went, but they lowed as they went, and had more mind to return to their Calves, than to go forward. Singleneſs of heart is neceſſary for all who come unto God; and there-
Eccluſ. 1.28. fore the Son of *Syrach* warned all ſuch to take heed of approaching him *with a double heart*: Which
*Jam.*4.8. counſel St. *James* repeats, *Draw nigh to God*, but firſt *purifie your hearts, you double minded*, whoſe Souls are partly for God, partly for Sin;
*Hebr.*10. 22. which the Author to the *Hebrews* calls *drawing near with true heart*, purg'd from all Hypocriſie, becauſe *the God with whom we have to do, loves Truth in the inward parts*, and can take no pleaſure in ſuch as are double minded, *i. e.* fluctuate be-

between a pretence of being vertuous, and a Law of ſin, called *halting between two opinions*; leaning one while one way, and one while another, as thoſe who halt do. It was not a *piece*, but *all*, which was meant in that Demand, *My Son give me thy heart*; for ſo our Saviour inculcating a Rule long before given, ſays, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, with thy whole heart. The contrary is ſo odious to God, that he declared plainly that he hated the Jews aforementioned, becauſe their *heart was not whole with him*; *they did not follow him fully*, as was ſaid of *Joſhuah*, who had *another ſpirit*, but *turn'd aſide like a deceitful bow*; you may as well make a crooked Bow, carry

Num. 14. 24.

carry an Arrow directly to the Mark, as preſent any thing acceptable to God with a falſe heart. Therefore our Lord in his excellent Parable of the Sower hath told us plainly, that his Goſpel will grow in no ſoyl, but a *good and honeſt heart.* So St. *Paul* told the *Corinthians*, that they could preſent no fruit as an acceptable Sacrifice
1 Cor. 5. 6. to God, except with *unleavened bread of ſincerity*; for Hypocriſie ſour's the perſon and his actions.

The true Convert endeavours to bring himſelf to that paſs, that he can ſay truly, He loves God above all things; which cannot be, if he retain ſtill the love of any ſin in his ſoul. That man is juſt as re-

religious as the *Assyrian Samaritans*, mention'd 2 *King.* 17. 33. who blending their Heathen Ceremonies with Jewish Rites, made a Mungrel Worship, and *serv'd the Lord and their own God's too.* They did not know that the Law given was, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* It was good counsel of the old Philosopher, ἁπλωσον σεαυτὸν, Be one thing, deal plainly with God. Dost thou pretend to make over thy soul to God by a Deed, and art so weak as not to know that it will be abhor'd, when thou hast spoil'd the Grant which preserves, and maim'd it with a power of Revocation? Deal fairly; *God will not be mocked.* The true Penitent must bid an E-

ternal

ternal farewel to all his former ſins, and that he may practiſe them no more, muſt cut off all affection to every ſinful way; as the wiſe General, when he had landed his men in the Country which he deſigned to Conquer, burnt the Ships which brought him thither, that ſo his Souldiers might not upon occaſion think of a cowardly return.

Luke 9. 62. Our Saviour hath declared, That he who *puts his hand to the heavenly Plough*, and doth not renounce what may make him *look back*, is *not fit for the Kingdom of God*. He which holds the Plough, and often looks back, will make mad work on't; his Furrows will be all crooked. When the ſame our Saviour bids us, *Remember* Lot's *wife*,

Luke 17. 32.

he

he ſignified to us plainly enough, that ſuch as have forſaken *Sodom* and their ſins, muſt not look back with hankering eyes upon them.

If thy heart be ſincere with God, thou mayeſt do well to expreſs it to God upon thy knees in ſome ſuch words as theſe are, O Lord, I have ſinned againſt thee, but I repent, and thou underſtandeſt the depth of my heart, and knoweſt that I repent truly. Thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. In thy ſacred preſence I make my Vow that I will obey thee. I will obſerve the Rules of my Nature ſo far, as by them I am taught what my Duty is: and where they fail, I will read carefully thy Goſpel, and what

what I find there to be thy Will, ſhall be to me an indiſpenſable Law. I make this ſolemn proteſtation, that I will harbour no Enemy of thine in my ſoul; and leſt any thing lurk there which may diſpleaſe thee, let me know my heart by thy Inſtruction, and I will caſt it out. I deſire to be in thy ſight an *Iſraelite indeed*, and pray that I may inherit the bleſſing which thou beſtoweſt upon thoſe *in whoſe ſpirit is no guile.* This is well expreſſed in that holy Prayer which *David* made in theſe words, *Try me, O God, and ſeek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts; look well if there be any way of wickedneſs in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.*

Pſa. 139. 23, 24.

2. Ho-

2. Honeſt Intention muſt be perfected with firm Reſolution and fixed purpoſe of ſoul; and that muſt be formed and ſettled by ſerious deliberation, that is, due conſideration of thoſe things which are the matter of Obedience, and alſo the difficulties which may occur in the doing them. He which undertakes the buſineſs of Religion thus, will find in a little time that he needed to have his Reſolution ſo grounded. Our Saviour in ſeveral of his excellent Diſcourſes hath taught us this; let us conſider ſome of them: *If any man will come after me*, that is, *to be my Diſciple, let him deny himſelf*; he muſt think now of renouncing all ſelf-will, and reſigning himſelf whol- Matt. 16. 24.

wholly to my Diſcipline, and take my yoke upon his Neck, yield himſelf wholly to be governed by my Goſpel. And leſt we ſhould be miſtaken, and ſo fly off afterward, our Saviour hath in that told us plainly what we muſt be, *viz. Godly*, *Righteous*, *Sober*, *Chaſt*, *Humble*, *Charitable*, *Patient*; and hath ſhown us fully what the work of his Servants is. Have you conſidered theſe things? Yes; He requires nothing but what is exceeding good; I cannot be happy except I be ſuch a perſon as his Goſpel requires. So far it is well, but this is not all; for our Saviour adds, That he *muſt take up his Croſs and follow him*; *i. e.* he muſt not only be willing to compoſe his tem-

temper and life according to our Saviour's Doctrine and Example, he muſt alſo be prepar'd to bear patiently theſe Afflictions, which may happen to him only for being Chriſt's Diſciple.

This our Saviour declared in his general Diſcourſes, and alſo when any particular perſons came to be Proſelytes, he dealt plainly with them; and that they might be fully informed, and follow him upon good grounds, he acquainted them with what they might expect in his ſervice. A certain Scribe, ſtruck with admiration of his Miracles, and thereupon poſſibly expecting that in a while ſuch a Perſon would make his Diſciples great, profeſſed that he *would fol-* *Matt* 8. 19, 2c.

low him whereſoever he went. Our Saviour, to ſee if this forward Man had any worthy Reſolutions in him, told him how mean his worldly condition was, in that *the Foxes have holes* in Earth, and *Birds have neſts* in Trees, *but the Son of Man hath not*, as it happened to divers of his Servants, *any certain Habitation*: No Houſe of his own for himſelf, much leſs to entertain his followers. He bad him think of this, and then reſolve what to do.

For the fuller Explication of this matter concerning the right forming of Chriſtian Reſolution, let us read that Diſcourſe which our Saviour made to a great Multitude, when he was giving them his

his Divine Inſtruction touching this affair: He which will be my Diſciple, muſt not only embrace my Doctrine; but muſt make account that poſſibly many things will fall out to him for his profeſſion and practiſe of my Religion, which will not be very pleaſing to fleſh and blood; he may perchance offend not only his Neighbours, but his Parents, and and make Enemies to him of his beſt Friends; may endanger the loſing of his Liberty, and after that his Life; and yet for all this he muſt not forſake my ſervice: For if any *man come unto me, and doth not hate his Father, Mother, Wife, and Children, and Brethren and Siſters, yea and his own Life, cannot* Luke 14. 26, 27, &c.

be my Diſciple. Which words cannot be underſtood properly; for it is impious to hate our Parents and other Relations, and abſurd to hate ones ſelf; but he means, and other Scriptures teach us ſo, that we muſt love all perſons and things leſs than our Saviour; and that will appear, when we ſuffer none of them to make us deſert the Obedience which we have promiſed him. *And he that doth not take up his Croſs, and come after me,* &c. Not that Perſecutions do always follow the profeſſion of Chriſtian Religion; or that any man is bound upon the undertaking of it, to a-
v. 33. bandon all he hath in the World; not that we ſhould preſently do it becauſe we are Chriſtians, but that

we

we ſhould be prepar'd to do it, preferring our Saviour before all things, and being reſolv'd to part with all, rather than break our Faith given to him.

To illuſtrate further what he ſaid concerning this way of forming a Reſolution, our Saviour adds two Compariſons, taken from the Rules which men follow in building Houſes and making War. If any man think of raiſing a Houſe, he muſt caſt up what it will coſt him, both for Materials and Work; and if he begin to build, being either not provided for ſo much Charge, or not willing to lay it out, he will leave off in the middle of an imperfect Deſign, and be laughed at for a fooliſh Un-

dertaking: Or if a man go to War, he will conſult with himſelf whether he hath Supplies enough for his Expedition, and Forces ſufficient to fight his Adverſary; elſe he will think it better to keep Peace if he have it, or ſend Ambaſſadours for it upon as good Conditions as he can get. So in this Spiritual building or warfare, for in divers reſpects Religion may be compared to both, we muſt be at much coſt, a great deal muſt be laid out, and the Enemy which we have to oppoſe will bring much Force againſt us; therefore we muſt prepare before hand, by conſidering what we will do when it comes to the puſh, and bear the Croſſes which we may meet, and

fol-

follow Chriſt notwithſtanding any inconvenience which may happen to us for ſo doing. He which frames his Reſolution ſo, will not be ſurpriſed, *i. e.* have his heart infeebled with ſudden Aſſaults; he foreſaw what would come: neither will he be weakned by the Conflict, he prepared himſelf for the Incounter before hand. The wiſe Son of *Syrach* underſtood this well when he ſaid, *My ſon, if thou comeſt to ſerve the Lord, prepare thy ſoul for tentation*; which muſt be done by planting a firm Reſolution of Obedience in the bottom of our hearts. Our Saviour hath given the reaſon of this in the Parable of the Sower, where he tells us of many that may receive the Seed,

that is the Doctrine of his Goſpel, into their hearts with joy, and it may ſeem to grow and flouriſh in their life, and yet it ſhall wither in the time of Tentation, becauſe *it wanted root*, had not *depth of earth and moiſture*, as the Evangeliſts phraſe it differently, but meaning the ſame thing, *i. e.* a well fixed Reſolution will maintain future Obedience, as Corn is nouriſhed and ſupported by ſufficiency of moyſture, which it receives from a ſound root fixed deep in a moiſt ground, and by that inabled to bring its fruit to perfection.

The Hypocrite and ſincere Chriſtian conſidered together in this matter, ſeem to me to be well repreſented by *Orphanah* and *Ruth*, when

when they began a Journey with *Naomi* their Mother in Law, pretending that they would accompany her from the Land of *Moab* to her own Country — They both ſet out with great forwardneſs; but when *Naomi* told them what ſmall expectation of worldly advantage they could have in her, *Orphanah*'s love began to vaniſh, and extended only a farewell kiſs; but *Ruth* having heard the worſt of it, would not be ſo ſhaken off — I perceive how it is, but my Reſolution continues firm for all that, — *whereſoever thou goeſt I will go; and nothing but death ſhall part thee and me.* So the true Chriſtian to our Saviour, I will follow thee, O Lamb of God, wherever thou goeſt: I do not bar-

Ruth 1.10.

v. 16.

gain

gain with thee for ſmall way and fair weather; nothing but death, no nor death it ſelf ſhall part thee and me: As thy love to me, O Jeſus, was ſtronger than death, ſo ſhall mine be to thee. Neither things preſent nor things to come, nor life nor death could ſeparate St. *Paul* from the Love of Chriſt.

Thus a Chriſtian doth become ſtedfaſtly minded, or as in the Hebrew, ſtrengthens himſelf in his Reſolution, exhorting himſelf, as the Apoſtle did the *Antiochians*, Acts 11. 23. to *cleave to God with purpoſe of heart.* He did not make them believe that they ſhould not ſuffer much inconvenience if they did ſo: No; for he told them, as others, that they muſt *through many Tribulations enter into*

into the Kingdom of God, but that they ſhould reſolve *to ſuffer hardſhip as good Souldiers of Jeſus Chriſt*, as he told *Timothy*, and gave him for a pattern his own purpoſe, with which he was well acquainted, which was to ſerve Chriſt his Maſter, though he knew how many and how great Afflictions awaited him continually in all places for ſo doing.

If any ſay, It is neceſſary to form a ſtrong Reſolution; but will ſuch thoughts as thoſe do it? will the fore-conſideration of miſchiefs prepare us againſt them? Men by foreſeeing evils that may happen, do excite themſelves to take care to avoid them by ſteering a Courſe contrary to that which may lead upon

upon them. To this I anſwer, That conſidering before hand what Inconveniencies may happen to us in a matter undertaken upon weighty Reaſons, will make them hurt us leſs when we meet them: but that is not all which I meant as to this Method of forming our Reſolution; for that we muſt add the ſtrengthening of Faith in our ſouls, that we may have a firm belief of theſe things which the Goſpel hath propounded to encourage us to undertake the Obedience of it, notwithſtanding all diſcouragements, and that is the great Reward which ſhall be given to obedient Souls. When our Saviour told ſuch as came to him, that poſſibly they might *loſe Father, Mother, Lands, Life,*

for

for his ſake, it had been a very poor Motive to make them embrace his Doctrine if he had ſaid no more; but he added, that ſuch as did ſo ſhould have *an hundred fold more*, that is, more true ſatisfaction in what they did, than they could have had in any other way in this life, and *in the world to come life everlaſting*, or eternal happineſs.

Now that he who purpoſes to obey Chriſt's Goſpel ſincerely muſt fortifie his Reſolution with the ſtrength of Faith, is well expreſſed by an Apoſtle who had Experience in this matter: The Devil was in the world like a *roaring Lyon, ſeeking whom he might devour*, and would, if he could, by Perſecution deſtroy Chriſtianity, whom

1 *Pet.* 5. 9, 10.

whom reſiſt, being ſtedfaſt in the Faith, knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your Brethren who are in the world. But *the God of all Grace*, the moſt merciful God, who hath called *us to eternal Glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after you have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you.* By what? another Apoſtle tells us, by the στερέωμα τῆς πίστεως; or as *v.7. ſtabliſhed in or by Faith*, by which you are fixed to your Saviour, as a Tree is to a ſtrong Root, or a Houſe to a deep Foundation, for he uſeth both Metaphors. Our Saviour hath made no new Methods ſince, and therefore every ſincere Chriſtian muſt make uſe of this in the forming of his Reſolution, and in

Col. 2. 5.

ſo

ſo doing he may ſay thus to himſelf—O my Soul, thou art now ſetting upon a courſe of holy Life according to the Precepts of thy Saviour, be real and make thy purpoſe ſtrong, ſaying with that holy man, I have fully purpoſed to offend no more, I will ſerve thee with my whole ſoul from the bottom of my heart; I make a Reſignation of my ſelf to thy will, and bind my ſelf by a firm Vow, the ſtrongeſt Bond I can find, that I will keep thy Commandments; and when the Enemy of my ſoul ſhall tell me that thus I ſhall miſs the pleaſure of ſin, I will tell him, I know it, and that they are but for a ſeaſon, and to be deſpiſed in compariſon of the favour of God,

and

and joy of doing what we ſhould; and when he adds that probably I ſhall ſuffer in this way many things not very pleaſing to the fleſh, I will tell him, that whatſoever they are I reckon them unworthy to be compared to the reward of Obedience; and when he frights me with the auſterity of a ſtrict life, I will tell him, that excellent things have difficulty, and aſk him, if he have not in his Ramblings obſerved the careful obſervances of a Wreſtler or Racer, how punctually they keep themſelves to ſtrict methods of preparation for their Conflict, when all that they hoped for was but a Crown of fading Leaves; and is it irrational for me to do all I can

for

for an eternal Crown? When he bids me look upon those multitudes of suffering Christians, whom Religion brought into misery, in which they perished, I will tell him that I will *follow their Faith, considering the end of their Conversation*, the happy close of their holy Lives, which remov'd them into the regions of endless Bliss, and thither I will follow them. And if he say, But he whom you call Saviour was crucified. Yes I will Answer, and died and was buried, but he rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, and bade me follow him; and because I hope ere long to be with him, I will keep in my way, which will certainly bring me unto him.

3. To theſe two we muſt add a careful uſe of thoſe means which are appointed to make us ſuch as we are commanded to be; Chriſt never intended his Goſpel for idle ſouls, *i. e.* ſuch as will take no pains to be ſaved, who will not carefully endeavour to be made good. They are not for Chriſt, thoſe delicate perſons who cannot endure to think of working out their *ſalvation with fear and trembling*, nor will hear of giving diligence to be found of God in peace. Our Saviour hath told us expreſly, that he will condemn that Servant, who did not prepare himſelf to do his Maſters Will, either in the day time being girt fit for any ſervice, and being ready with lighted Candles

Luke 12. 47.

dles to expect his Master when he comes home at night.

A negligent Temper is odious in this business.

1. Because it is trifling in a matter of greatest Importance.
2. Because it is sordid, and would serve the great and good God with that which costs it nothing.

1. This Temper is far from that which should be in a sincere Christian, if it be liable to the said Reproaches, as indeed it is. That man whom sin hath made sick, and will not carefully use the means appointed for his recovery, either

underſtands not his danger, or ſuppoſeth the method preſcribed for the cure of his Diſeaſe not neceſſary, or will not be at the trouble of undertaking ſuch things as are requiſite to his recovery, and rather than do ſo, will remain in his ſin, that is, die of his ſickneſs; What prudent Phyſician would meddle with ſuch a Patient? It may be the ſick Hypocrite would do ſome little things, when ſuch as are very great are neceſſary for his health. This is well expreſſed in that ſmart Letter which *Diogenes* wrote to *Dionyſius*, when ſome vain Philoſophers flattered him in his great Vices: *Alas! man*, ſaid *Diogenes*, *thy Diſeaſes are ſuch that they need cuttings and burnings; but thou*

thou haſt got together a few Diſſemblers, which ſay to thee as fond Grandmothers and Nurſes do to ſick Children, Δέξαι τέκνον, ἔγχεαι εἶπι με φιλεῖς, μικρὸν ἔτι, μόνον τοῦτὶ πρόσφαγε, i. e. *Take this my Child, pour it in, if you love me do, a little more, eat but this ſmall bit.* Triflers! The Children are extream ſick, and muſt be made to take their Phyſick, or die. The ſincere Chriſtian knows that our neceſſitous condition requires a great care for the repair of it; that the Goſpel which we are to obey is a Law of great Holineſs, and hath in it many Commandements, requires obedience in thought, temper, and action; yes, and that with reſiſtance of many Temptations, ſtrong, becauſe

agreeable to our natural Appetites, which will mak our work to go on ſometimes like that of the Waterman, when he hales his Boat againſt the Stream— And we ſhall find hinderances from infirmity of Fleſh, and inconſtancy of Spirit, diſtractions of our Senſes and many wild Phanſies, beſides the malice of a watchful Devil. By this the Penitent ſees what need he hath of great care in the uſe of all means, which may carry him on in his courſe; and he ſays, Since my Saviour hath ſhowed me the value of my Soul, that it is of more worth than the acquiſt of all the pleaſures in the World for my whole Life, and hath in great kindneſs told me how I may ſave it, I will

care-

carefully keep to his methods, knowing, that if I uſe not the means given me for the avoiding of ſin, I ſhall be both guilty of the ſin I commit, and of negligence in not endeavouring to prevent it, and ſo draw upon my ſelf fooliſhly a double curſe. He hath called me to the heavenly Journey, and I will undertake it. It is an eaſie thing to take a Map and travel over a great part of the World by the Eye; but he that will arrive at a Country far diſtant from his own, muſt go over many craggy Hills, paſs through many deep ways, and croſs rough Seas before he can get thither; he that will not begin his Journey except it be made as eaſie to be performed, as

to be looked over in a Map, doth plainly ſhow that he did never heartily, or elſe moſt fooliſhly, deſign it. He which hath a Watch in his Pocket may expect that it ſhould tell him the hours of the Day, but not unleſs he ſkrew the Spring to a juſt ſtrength, and wind it up at due ſeaſons. God hath put a Divine Principle like a Spring of holy Life in our Souls, and it will ſhow its force in us by making us feel in our ſelves a ſtrong propenſion to God, and an inclination to all goodneſs; but we muſt wind it up daily, and ſtrengthen it with ſuch Meditations and Prayers as may keep it in vigor. Of what life is a Watch, when the Spring is ſpoiled or unbent? Di-

vine

vine Grace is like ſparks of Fire hid in the Soul, but we muſt blow them up, as the Apoſtles word is (ἀναζωπυρεῖν) the Fire will go out, which is not maintained with proper fewel, and the Spirit may be quenched. 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 19.

2. The forementioned Temper is rejected by the ſincere Chriſtian; becauſe it is ſordid, and would ſerve the great and good God with that which coſts little or nothing. He that would do as little as he can in Gods ſervice, hath but mean thoughts of that great God with whom he hath to do, and underſtands not the greatneſs of that reward which God hath in his infinite goodneſs promiſed to ſuch as ſerve him ſincerely; or is ſo baſe, that

that however he will do no more than pleaſeth himſelf in point of Obedience. If this Chriſtian had been a Jew, you ſhould have ſeen him go to his Fold, and there ſeek up and down till he had found out a ſheep, either lame, or ſuch as had but one eye, if none were quite blind, and that he would have gone and offered for a Sacrifice: but God did then, and doth ſtill abhor that vile Temper. It's true, God is ſo good, that in ſome caſes he doth *accept the Will for the Deed*, when it is impoſſible to be performed: but when the Caſe is otherwiſe, we ſhall forfeit our ſincerity, and for not preparing our ſelves to do our Maſter's Will be beaten with many ſtripes. God

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is ſo gracious, that he hath mercy upon our Ignorance, and pities our invincible infirmities, and forgives that ſin which we could not poſſibly or probably avoid, and he helps our weakneſſes: but ſtill requires that we ſhould always ſtand upon our guard, watch always againſt ſurpriſes, as well as abhor voluntary Tranſgreſſion, deſiring and endeavouring nothing ſo much as to pleaſe God; and ſo much the rather, becauſe we perceive that the Maſter whom vve ſerve is ſo gracious, that he accepts vvhat vve have done heartily and ſincerely, though it vvas not the moſt vve could have done, nor done in the beſt manner that poſſibly vve could.

4. Sin-

4. Sincerity alſo ſuppoſeth that vvhich Chriſt vvill require in every true Diſciple of his, a good attainment, a competent proficiency in the ſtate of Vertue. It vvere a mean buſineſs, if the ſincerity of Chriſtian Religion ſhould be contracted into a few cold Wiſhes, and the attainment of its Profeſſors, ſhould not exceed the faint *Wouldings* of Hypocrites; eſpecially ſince the Chriſtian Religion is the moſt Noble in its Deſign, and vvorks vvith the higheſt Principles, and yet improve the progreſs of its Diſciples but into ſuch a motion as a Door hath upon the Hinges, and ſo leave them in the ſad condition of thoſe Hypocrites vvhom the Apoſtle reproacheth,

proacheth, *who were always learning,* 2 *Tim.* 3. 7.
but never came to the knowledge of the Truth; vvho vvere alvvays learning, came to thoſe places vvhere the Goſpel vvas taught, but vvere never able to come to experience the Truth of it in themſelves. What vvas the Reaſon? Becauſe they gave heed to the Heretical Doctrine of ſome ſeducing Teachers, and ſo nouriſhed their Hypocriſie in Errour; but if they had received the Truth of the Goſpel in the love of it, and reſign'd themſelves to the government of it vvith ſincerity, it would have made them another kind of people. For this hear our Saviour — *You ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free* — If you receive my *Joh.* 8. 32

Go-

Goſpel vvith ſincere Faith, it vvill ſhovv it ſelf in its effects upon you, it vvill make you free. From vvhat? from the ſlavery of ſin, from all habitual ſin, and alſo from the acts of groſs ſins, every one of vvhich is damnable; Which, as *Tertullian* ſaid, a Child of God cannot do, or muſt ceaſe to be the Child of God if he do them, as Murder, Adultery, Perjury, Idolatry, &c. And if the true Penitent have been formerly given to any ſin, he vvill forſake that too: *Pſ.*18.23. So *David*, *I kept me from mine Iniquity:* yes, vvhen he had repented; and if he had not, he could not have had any teſtimony of ſincerity. The attainment of a ſincere Chriſtian is to have goodneſs ha-

habitual to the ſoul, to be pleaſed vvith doing his Duty. For this ſee 1 *John* 5. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous. For whoſoever is born of God overcometh the World; and this is the victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.* The ſincere Chriſtian ſhovvs his Love in Obedience, and not only ſo, but delights to do his Duty. God's *Commands are not grievous, i. e.* as our Saviour ſaid before, *his yoke is eaſie, and his burden is light*; and being born of God, he overcometh the World by the Spirit of Faith vvhich is in him, vvhich is ſtronger than the Spirit that is in the World.

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This our Saviour expects, as vve ſee in the promiſe vvhich he made after his Aſcenſion *to him that overcometh*: not to him vvhich fights only; no, but *to him that overcometh*; and this he might vvell do, becauſe he gave povver not only to *fight*, but to *overcome*; and ſaid long before, that *to whom much is given, of them more ſhall be required*, that is, ſuch improvement as may anſvver the beſtovving.

When our Saviour compared himſelf to a Vine, and his Servants to the Branches of it, ſuppoſing that he gave them ſufficient vital Juyce for the purpoſe, he told them that they vvere to *glorifie his Father by bringing forth much fruit*,

Joh. 15. 8.

fruit, and then they ſhould be, and *appear* plainly *to be his Diſciples*. By which it is manifeſt, that our great Shepherd would have his Flock to be ſuch Sheep as thoſe which *Epictetus* mentions, who were not to bring their Hay and Graſs and lay it before their Shepherds, to let them ſee how much they had eaten; but having well digeſted their Food, were to bring it forth in Milk and Wool, and ſo to approve themſelves to him who fed them. So ſincere Chriſtians are not to declare what they are in words or profeſſion, much leſs in vain oſtentation, or to make excuſes for what they are not; but having concocted our Saviour's Doctrine in their ſouls, do as St.

Jam. 3. 13. *James* teacheth, *Shew out of a good converſation their works with meekneſs of wiſdome.*

Here I think it not unfit to admoniſh every one, who would have the Teſtimony of their Conſcience concerning their ſincerity, that they ſhould take heed of excuſing themſelves to God, when they are not ſuch as they ſhould be; no, though they may ſeem to have ſome places of Scripture on their ſide. And for this I think it may not be amiſs to relate to you, what St. *Chryſoſtome* told his Church at *Conſtantinople* upon this occaſion; he had often reproved them for going to the Heathen ſhows, which by their immodeſty were offenſive to the chaſte, and alſo odious by their cruel

cruel effuſion of Humane blood; After this ſome of his wandering Sheep had gone to them again, and when he ſtill continued his Reproof, they anſwered, That truly they did what they would not, but thought that was no great matter, ſince St. *Paul* made the ſame Defence for himſelf; and ſo they were not more to be blamed than he, ſince they diſliked what they did. This hypocritical pretext put the holy man into a fit of paſſionate Zeal, and he fell thus upon them; *What*, ſays he, *do you not only ſerve ſin, but abuſe the holy Scripture? Do you ſatisfie your luſts, and then reproach the honour of an Apoſtle? I, I, every one that loves to ſin, deſires to find out ſome excuſe,*

which might maintain his practiſe; and now you fall foul upon an Apoſtle, though I know it is not with an intent to reproach him, but to make an Apology for your ſelves. Then that they might not think that St. *Paul* ſpake thoſe words in that Chapter of himſelf; but in the perſon of one in conflict with ſin, but at preſent overcome by it, and being ſenſible of his Danger, cries out, *O miſerable man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?* and that St. *Paul* himſelf was not now carnal, ſold under ſin, to obey what it commanded; he adds, *Was St.* Paul *carnal, in whom Chriſt lived, who was governed by the Holy Ghoſt, who had Chriſt always ſpeaking in him? &c.* To which one may

may very well add, What, was St. *Paul* only a Servant of Chriſt's in Notion of Mind, but not in Obedience of Will, who had ſerved him faithfully ſo many years, and ſuffered the loſs of all things for him, and was ready to do ſo again? *Whom the Law of the Spirit of Life had made free from the Law of Sin and Death? who lived, but no longer he, but Chriſt in him,* willing what he would in him, and doing what he would by him; for to him he had reſign'd Soul and Body? Strange! Is it the Art of a true Chriſtian to contrive how he may evade his Duty inſtead of doing it? Will any wiſe man build the peace of his Conſcience, and lay the ſtreſs of his hopes upon

Excuſes? Can any man make us believe that the chief of the Apoſtles was ſo dull, as not to ſee a difference between an Excuſe and an Aggravation? Doth any thing aggravate a ſin more than to commit it againſt ones conſcience? Was this the ſincerity of an old Diſciple, the attainment of *Paul* the aged? Had he but ſo learn'd Chriſt, or taught him no better? To excuſe himſelf that he ſinned, he did what his Conſcience told him he ſhould not have done? He hath rejected this vile pretence as much as can be in two places, where he ſpeaketh plainly of himſelf, *I have lived in all good Conſcience to this day*; i. e. according to the Principles of Vertue, which

Act. 23. 1.

which he had being a Jew; and what, did he grow worſe afterward? No: for he ſaith, that having received Chriſtian Principles, he did then, as being more obliged, *exerciſe himſelf always to have a Conſcience void of offence to God and Man.* Acts 24. 16. It had been a brave Defence (had it not?) for the Primitive Chriſtians to have told the Heathens according to this interpretation, that they deſired to be better than they, but were indeed as bad; eſpecially ſince they had received in their Regeneration a power, which enabled them to overcome thoſe ſins to which the Heathens were ſlaves. For ſo the ſame Apoſtle, *Walk in the Spirit, and you ſhall not fulfil the Luſts of* Gal. 5. 16.

the Fleſh. Not that he meant dully, if they live in the Spirit, they ſhould not live in the Fleſh; no, but that, if you follow the conduct of the Spirit, you will receive thoſe aſſiſtances from it, which ſhall enable you to overcome thoſe Tentations which Hypocrites pretend as the only Excuſes, why they live after the Fleſh. But theſe aſſiſtances muſt be made uſe of. A man may be overcome of another, not ſtronger than himſelf, if he will not uſe the Arms which he hath to defend himſelf. It is promiſed that *if we reſiſt the Devil, he ſhall fly from us*— But can any man think that if he do not reſiſt the Devil, he will fly from him? or that his yielding to the Devil will

will be any excuſe to him when he is overcome, and made his Slave, when he did not reſiſt him?

To cloſe this; ſince fooliſh Excuſes are uſeleſs in theſe matters, let every ſincere Chriſtian ſay to himſelf — O my ſoul, it is time for thee to know what thou haſt attained in Chriſtian Religion, to ſeek a proof of Chriſt dwelling in thee, and to find a good Evidence of true goodneſs. What doth all that thou haſt done amount to? Doſt thou find in thy ſelf a thankfulneſs which is in ſome good meaſure anſwerable to the goodneſs of Chriſt's Love, and the many Benefits which thou haſt received from him? Haſt thou that Reverence towards him which is due to

the

the Dignity of his Perſon? Is thy Temper conformable to his Goſpel, and thy Life to his holy Example? Doſt thou only pleaſe thy ſelf in the contemplation of Divine Truths, and reſt in the ſpeculation of heavenly things? doſt thou not alſo endeavour to find the power of Goſpel Motives working in thy ſoul to the ends for which they were propounded? Doſt thou carefully read the holy Goſpel, that thou mayeſt not be ignorant of, or forget any part of thy Duty, and then pray with hearty Devotion for Grace to help thee to obey, and then makeſt uſe of what is beſtowed, that thou mayeſt receive more, as need ſhall require? Doſt thou give thy ſelf leave to make Hypocritical

critical Excuſes for Diſobedience, and pretending that Chriſt is made Righteouſneſs to us, thinkeſt that thou mayeſt indulge ſome ſin in thy ſelf? or rather abhorring that falſneſs, doeſt thou endeavour to give Teſtimony of thy Love to Chriſt's Perſon, by obeying his Commands, and ſeekeſt Reconciliation with God only upon the terms which he hath appointed? Doſt thou find that as the firſt purpoſes of thy ſoul were to obey, ſo the habitual inclination of thy mind doth propound ſtill the ſame way, and that the conſtant workings and daily motions of thy ſoul are all ſet for the accompliſhment of thy holy purpoſes? The good man, who finds that it is thus with him,

him, will be conſcious to himſelf of his ſincerity to God; the inward ſenſe and feeling of his ſoul will tell him, that his Converſion is ſincere: as a man knows himſelf to be an honeſt man, who endeavours in all his actions to keep himſelf cloſe to the Rules of good Life.

5. To what hath been ſaid I need ad no more, but that the ſincere Chriſtian makes a daily progreſs towards the perfection of degrees, *goes on to perfection*, as the Author to the *Hebrews* ſaid. The ſincere Chriſtian doth not make it his work vainly to compare himſelf with others, whoſe defects he thinks he hath eſpied, and pleaſe himſelf in what he hath attained, becauſe they are not ſo good; but hum-

humbly desires by daily endeavors to grow better than himself, and to bring the sincerity of his estate nearer to the perfection of Degrees. He is mindful of the advice given, *to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He grows in knowledge, who understands his way to God better and better; for *the light of the Righteous shines more and more to perfect day.* The Traveller that understands his way pretty well, having a great Journey to go, riseth it may be by Moon-light, or takes the first dawnings of the Morning for his Guidance; but as the day comes on, he grows more assur'd by the clear light. But he grows in Grace too, *i. e.* he is bettered in soul,

ſoul, and does his Duty to God better, and rides on more confidently, and with more ſpeed, as the Traveller doth when he hath more light to aſſure him of his way.

We learn from the Apoſtles of the Goſpel Aſſiſtances bringing a Eph. 4. 13 good Chriſtian εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, *to a perfect man*, to that *meaſure of ſtature which is full of Chriſt*; and makes the Chriſtian like a man who is arrived to thoſe years which beſtow upon him a great vigor of ſtrength, a firm conſtitution (καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων) which the Apoſtle pray- 2 Cor. 13. 9. ed for the *Corinthians*, which he there calls καταρτίσις, conſummation in grace, which the *Romans* having obtained, he ſaid of them, Rom. 15. 14. *that they were full of goodneſs*. Our Sa-

Saviour is ſaid to *have grown in ſtature of body*, in *ſpirit*, and in *favour with God and Man*, i.e. to have increaſed in ſuch Vertues, and abounded in ſuch Actions, as did exceedingly pleaſe God and Man. St. *John* calls this *proſpering in ſoul* by merciful Additions of grace, which he prayed for his Friend *Gaius*. Luke 25. 2. 3 Joh. 2.

That which a good man ſhould endeavour in this matter, St. *Paul* hath expreſſed to the life in his own practiſe, *i.e. I have not yet attained I am not made perfect, but I follow on, that I may get to the further end, Chriſt leading me by the hand, and helping me forward, which makes me to forget what is behind, and to add to what I have done well, creeping forward, and preſſing* Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14.

ſing towards the Mark, that I may not come ſhort of the prize. I will end this Diſcourſe with a ſhort Gloſs upon what is ſaid by *David* in a pathetick *Pſalm*, who makes mention of the great deſire which the *Iſraelites* had under the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation to go to *Jeruſalem*, that there they might enjoy the preſence of God in his Temple; and this paſſion did ſo tranſport them, that they envied the Happineſs of Sparrows and Swallows, Birds which had leave to make their neſts there; but more admired the felicity of God's Servants who dwelt in that Houſe, enjoying the manifeſtations of the Divine Preſence, and praiſing God continually for the many and great Mercies which they had

Pſal. 84.

had received from him, and then pronouncing them happy in whoſe hearts were the ways thither, *i. e.* who ſet and prepared their minds, reſolving to be there, and paſſing from Valley to Valley (for the Rode lay from Hill to Hill) with unwearied ſteps travelled till they came to that moſt deſirable place. —This doth every ſincere Chriſtian; his aim is at the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, *i. e.* the Viſion of Peace which is in the preſence of God, and he makes all his life one conſtant Journey thither, and is therefore truly called one of that *Generation of Travellers* who march towards *Sion*, and each day of his life is a ſtep in his way: and though by the common accidents of this *Pſal.* 24.

life he may be ſo hindred that he ſhall ſlack his pace awhile, and by the ſlumbers of the Night neceſſary to refreſh his wearied Body, his more active thoughts are laid aſleep; yet the very Night paſſing on with ſilent Minutes carries him, as a ſhip under ſail doth the Paſſenger ſleeping in his Cabbin, nearer to his Port, and when he is awake, perceiving that he is ſtill in his way, he goes on rejoycing, and makes what haſte he can to come to his Journeys end, the fruition of God in Heaven.

Having ſhown the Nature of Repentance, I come now to urge the Practiſe of it with three Motives, which are theſe,

1. The

1. The firſt is taken from the reaſonableneſs of Repentance in its own Nature.
2. The ſecond is that Encouragement which we have to it from the goodneſs of God, who is willing to forgive the Penitent.
3. The third is taken from the great and inevitable Miſchief which awaites Impenitence.

1. It is fit that ſinners ſhould repent, becauſe ſin is the moſt unnatural thing in the World. The ſtate of ſin is a contra-natural Temper, and the actions in which

it expresseth it self, are most unreasonable. When *John* the Baptist was sent before our Saviour to prepare his way, that is, to dispose men for the receiving of his Gospel, which is called *Luke* 1.17. to make a people ready prepared for the Lord, when he begun his work, by *turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*; he was said *Mat.*17.11. καθιςάναι πάντα, *to restore all things*; the word signifies *Reponere in naturæ congruentem statum*, to reduce men into a state agreeable to Nature, which by sin was discomposed. What can be more unnatural, than for the hearts of Fathers to be set against their Children, and for Children to hate their Parents? Out of that unreason-

ſonable courſe of ſin he brought them by Repentance into their natural Station.

For the reaſon aforeſaid, ſin in Scripture is called *diſtraction of mind*; for when the Prodigal Son made ſenſible of his Error returned to his Duty, he is ſaid, εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐλθεῖν, *to come to himſelf*; Sin had made him mad. The Prophet *Iſaiah* gives notice of the ſame thing, when he ſaid, *Shew your ſelves men, return to your mind, ye Tranſgreſſors.* He that ſins runs away from God and his own Reaſon both at once. *Reſipiſcentia*, the Latin word for Repentance, ſays the ſame; for he that Repents doth, as *Lactantius* ſays, *Mentem quaſi ab inſaniâ recipere.* St. *Paul* in the

Luke 15. 17.

Iſ. 46. 8.

2 *Tim.* 2. 5. ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy*, calls it Ἀνανήφειν, to awake one out of a drunken ſleep. Thoſe who ſlight the great Reaſons of their Duties to God, and leave themſelves to be hurried on in the courſe of their lives by brutiſh Appetites, act but like men who are mad or drunk; and they will confeſs it, if ever they do return to a right uſe of their mind and ſettled thoughts, which he hath loſt who thinks he may *be* and *do* what he will. Nothing but want of Reaſon will make any man prefer the looſe Wit of a mad man, and the wild motions of a Lunatick, before the wiſe thoughts and regular actions of ſober men. He which ſins tears all the Obligati-

ons

ons by which God hath engaged him to Obedience, breaks all the Bonds which his Almighty Creator hath laid upon his Soul, as the Frantick in the Goſpel did thoſe which were upon his Body; but he hath another ſenſe of things, and will not do ſo, when he is reſtored to a right mind.

It's true, it did not pleaſe God at firſt to make us immutable, yet that we might not fall into Error by ſudden Actions, he made us able to deliberate; and ſince we do nothing ſo well uſually but it may be bettered, and do many things ſo ill that they ought to be mended, he gave us the power of Animadverſion, that by reflecting upon our ſelves and actions,

we might correct by after endeavours that which was not ſo well done at firſt; and it is moſt reaſonable that we ſhould make uſe of this power, and fit for the Penitent to ſay, It was beſt indeed not to have ſinned, but it is next beſt to repent; and ſince I cannot recall what is paſt, yet I will mend it as well as I can, as he ſaid,

Λύσω ὅσ' ἐξήμαρτον ἐν τῷ πρὶν χρόνῳ,

I will endeavour to undo what was ill done in my former life. I will, as St. *John* ſaid of our Saviour, Λῦσαι τὰ ἁμαρτίαν, do what I can to deſtroy my ſins. Another Penitent ſaid well,

— Τὴν

—Τὴν ἁμαρτίαν
Αἰσχρὰν ἁμαρτὼν ἀναλαβεῖν πα-
ρέσωμαι.

i. e. having committed a baſe ſin, I will endeavour to mend it: Ἀναλαβεῖν, among other things, ſignifies to reſume a work, to do it better, to make up a defect.

A ſinner, among other words in Scripture, is ſaid ἁμαρτεῖν, which ſignifies to miſs the mark; and therefore he ſhould repent, and learn to aim better. Sin, among other names, is called Ἀπάτη, which ſignifies a going aſtray. He muſt needs be out of his way, who by ſin is departed from the God of his life; and therefore he ſhould take

take up, as the Apostles advice is, Acts 20. 21. *Repentance towards God*; *i. e.* he ought to repent and return to God. We have been told, and that truly, that Πάσης εὐζωΐας καὶ τελειώσεως ψυχικῆς ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος ἐστὶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἀνάβασις, that the beginning and end of all happy life and perfection is the lifting up of our souls to God. And by another, that man is ἐπιστρέφειν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν πεφυκώς, that a man doth naturally return to God, and therefore if we have by sin gone astray from him, and our own Nature, it is most reasonable, as his words are, Τὴν ἄνωθεν φυγὴν τῇ ἀντιστρόφῳ φυγῇ ἰάσθαι, to repair the mischief of our flight from above, from God and Vertue, by returning to him. To

To ſhow the reaſonableneſs of Repentance a little further, I ſhall only add two things to be conſidered, *viz.*

1. That ſin is the ſickneſs, deformity, and pain of the ſoul,
2. That it is a bold contempt of that excellent Order, which the Divine Wiſdom hath planted in Humane Nature.

1. Sin is the ſickneſs, deformity, and pain of the ſoul, and is as deſtructive of its health, beauty, and ſafety, as diſtempered humours, defect in any Member, ſolution of parts, or diſlocation of

of a Joynt can be to the Body; and if it be not timely cured, will be the death of the Soul. Therefore the recovery of a ſinner is expreſſed in Scripture by words which ſignifie Reſtoring of health to a ſick Man, the cure of a wound, the Reparation of a decayed or loſt Senſe, the ſetting of a diſlocated Bone in the right place again, and giving eaſe to one that is in pain. And there is good Reaſon for it: For is not an ignorant mind as bad as a blind eye? A will diſabled to all virtuous choice worſe than a lame hand? And vile affections more ugly than diſtorted Members? An evil Conſcience as afflictive as a Cancer in the Breaſt? Pining Envy as vexatious as the gnawing

gnawing of the Stomach? Are not the Furies of Luſt, and the Rage of Drunkenneſs or Helliſh Malice as unnatural Diſtempers in the Soul as Feveriſh heats in the Body? Is not the Soul as much tormented with thinking of the folly of Surfeits, as the Body is afflicted with the bad conſequences of them? Is not inſatiable deſire of worldly Greatneſs, Riches, and Pleaſure, as bad as the Hydropick Thirſt?

A man would think himſelf in a bad Condition, if he ſhould find himſelf deprived of Senſe, deformed in any principal Member, weakned in the powers of his Body, troubled with a deaf Ear, a lame Hand, and gouty Feet, his Blood

Blood inflamed, and feel himself racked with the pain of the Stone; he would have so little pleasure in himself that he would hate life: But he who is corrupted with sin is in a worse condition, for he hath neither beauty, health, or vigour in his Soul. He is maimed in his excellent Faculties, disabled to the use of his best powers, and hath defaced the beauty of his Soul, which is Vertue. A good man is pleased with himself, because he feels that his soul is in health, and that all his powers are in due symmetry, and finds that in his soul which should make a man in love with himself. He perceives, as *Plato* said, that he is ἐν κεκοσμένῳ τὴν νοῦν, or as his Scholar

Plotin

Plotin expreſſed it, ἔνδον καλὸν, in the Pſalmiſts words, *beautiful within*, that his ſoul is adorn'd with the παντέλεια τῶν ἀρετῶν, as *Philo* called it, with compleat vertue, which is the higheſt participation of the Divine Nature, by which we are capable to imitate God, which we then do when our ſouls are inriched with the ſincere Love of God, true Wiſdom, venerable Prudence, exact Juſtice, Godlike Benignity, generous Courage, lovely Temperance, pure Chaſtity, diſcreet Moderation, compoſed Paſſions; and in ſhort, when we have, as he ſaid, Ἐπιτεύγματα καλὰ, τρόπους καλοὺς καὶ ἤθη σώφρονα, καὶ ὅλως ἔργα ἀρετῆς καὶ διαθέσεις, honeſt Endeavours, good Deſigns, prudent Con-

Converſation, temperate Manners, and indeed all the Actions and Diſpoſitions of Vertue.

Theſe are the fair Delineations of the Divine Image, and finding thoſe in his ſoul, a good man is pleaſed with himſelf, and deſires to be as he is.

But theſe beautiful Characters of Immortal Spirits are all defac'd by wickedneſs; and after they are blurr'd, whenſoever the ſinner is forc'd to hold a Looking-glaſs before his ſoul, he throws it away, becauſe he cannot endure to ſee himſelf. *Ariſtotle* ſaid well concerning this, ὃ δὴ φαίνεται ὁ φαῦλος οὐδὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν φιλικῶς διάκειται, διὰ τὸ μηδὲν ἔχειν φιλητόν. A bad man hath no love

Ariſt. ad Nicom. l. 9. c. 4.

love

love for himſelf, becauſe he finds nothing in himſelf that is worthy to be loved. Much to the ſame purpoſe *Philo Jud.* A wicked man hath no joy in himſelf, after he hath debauched his Nature, and vitiated whatſoever was good in it, Μηδὲν ἔχων χαρᾶς ἄῃτον, having now nothing to rejoyce in. And writing upon that Verſe in *Geneſis*, that after man had perverted his Nature by ſin, as a puniſhment the Earth brought forth for his ſake Briers and Thorns, I, ſaith he, and ſo did his heart too, it could not do otherwiſe, adding theſe words, ἀλλὰ τὶ φυέσθαι κὴ βλαστάνει ἐν ἄφρονος ψυχῇ πλὴν τὰ κεντοῦντα κὴ πληώσκοντα αὐτὴν πάθη; *i. e.* for what elſe can grow or

ſpring upon the ſoul of a Fool, but ſuch paſſions as do prick and wound it?

Beſides that which I have ſaid upon this matter, I muſt add one particular miſchief, and that no ſmall one, which will always diſturb a ſinner, till he return to God by Repentance; and that is an *evil Conſcience*, a Serpent in the Boſome, which hath been well repreſented in our Saviour's Diſcourſes by a Worm gnawing the Bowels, or as a Ruſt fretting the heart, a Fire in the Veins. It is a θεῖον κέντρον, as *Euripides* calls it, a Divine Goad ſticking in the ſoul; which the Heathens acknowledged under the name of the *Theſpeſian Vipers*, and the mercileſs Furies.

Furies. This *Cotta* the Atheiſt, if we may believe *Tully*, confeſſed to be a very great vexation without reference to God; his words are theſe, *Sine ullâ Divina ratione gra-ve ipſius conſcientiæ pondus eſt.* It is as vexatious, as the company of an unpleaſant Ghoſt to ſuch as are haunted by it day and night, who can never be quiet till it be laid. *De Nat. Deor.*

But when reſpect is had to God, which it muſt and will have, for it is his Deputy, the caſe is much worſe; for it will torment the ſinner, both with the ſenſe of his Diſfavour, under which it puts him at preſent, and with the fear of that puniſhment which it makes him expect in time to come. It is a huge miſery to be in ſuch a ſtate

as makes a man afraid of God, which the guilt of sin always doth. This I cannot better say, than in the words of a forementioned Author, who speaking of the sad Condition in which *Adam* was after he had eaten the forbidden Fruit, and upon the sense of his Fault had hidden himself from God, hoping, at least wishing he had done so; when God enquiring after him, though knowing well enough where he was, asked him this Question, *Adam, where art thou?* He makes this Answer for him proper enough —Ἔιμι ὅπου οἱ τὴν Θεὸν ἀδυνατοῦντες, &c. *I am where they are, who are not able to look upon God; where they are, who obey not God. I am where they are, who hide themselves*

from

from their Maker; where they are, who are fled from vertue, and are deſtitute of wiſdom: I am where they are, who tremble by reaſon of guilt and cowardiſe.

This being the melancholick condition of wretched ſinners, after they come to conſider how things are with them in the cool of the day, when the heats of their Wine and Luſt are over, their ranting mirth ended, their Paſſions becalm'd, and they begin to bethink themſelves, and to reflect upon their Extravagancies, and are made to hear that ſtill voice which call'd to *Adam* after his prevarication; Wiſe men having compared the ſprightly, erect, chearful temper of good men with this Law,

juſtly pronounced that vertuous perſons do not only τῷ καλῷ ὑπερέχειν τῶν φαύλων, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ἡδονῇ νικᾶν, δι' ἣν μόνην δοκεῖ εἰς κακίον ὁ φαύλος ὑπάγεσθαι, *i.e. Not only exceed a vitious man in that which is honeſt, but alſo overcome him in pleaſure, for which only the ſinner ſeems to betake himſelf to wickedneſs.* And this pleaſure is ſo conſiderable, that *Ariſtotle* could ſay that it did exceed that of the wicked, thoſe Fugitives from Vertue, Τῇ καθαρότητι καὶ τῷ βεβαίῳ, in that it is more *pure* and more *ſolid*, and ſo is, as another calls it, ἡδονὴ ἀμεταμέλητος, ſuch a pleaſure as one ſhall never have cauſe to repent of.

Hier. 177

But

But thoſe pains which I fore-mentioned are more conſiderable, becauſe they are both more pungent and more laſting than thoſe of the Body; which made *Simplicius* ſay of them, That they are ὀδυνηρότερα τῶν σωματικῶν ἡδονήσεων καὶ χαλεπώτερα, καὶ μᾶλλον ἐκείνων δυσιαθεραπεύτοι, *i. e. that they are more grievous, ſtay longer, and are harder to be cured.* A bodily Diſtemper is more eaſily relieved than an evil Conſcience: take away the preſent pain, and the Body returns to its health; but the ſoul is pain'd with the remembrance of what is paſt, and the fear of what is to come, which is ſo great an affliction, that many times it makes the preſent ſtate intolerable. pag. 252.

Therefore Holy Scripture and Ancient Philosophers called the state of Sin the *Death* of the Soul: So our Saviour said of the vitious Prodigal, that he was *dead*; and the Apostle of the wicked world, that they were *dead in sins and trespasses*; and the Heathen Philosopher the same, Θάναλος γὰρ λογικῆς ἐσίας ἀθεΐα, &c. *i. e. The death of the soul is the deprivation of God and Reason, which are accompanied with a turbulent conflict of inordinate passions.* And that none might think that he dully supposed that an Immortal Being can dy, he adds, ὐ τῇ εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶ) ἐκβάσι, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἐκ εὖ εἶ) ἀποπτώσι, *i. e. Not that they cease to be, but that they fall from the happiness of life.* And in another

ther place he ſays, that wickedneſs is the *corruption of an Immortal Being*, φθείρει γὰρ ἐφ' ὅσον οἷόντε, it corrupts it as much as is poſſible; For this reaſon, when any of *Pythagoras*'s Sholars abandoned the practiſe of Vertue, and left his Society, they hung up a κενοτάφιον, an empty Coffin for him, looking upon him as one dead. And they might very well do ſo; for is it not the deſtruction of a reaſonable Being, to be corrupted in thoſe Principles which are eſſential to it, to be ſpoiled in its beſt Faculties, to be hindred from the free exerciſe of its Natural Powers, to be bereav'd of that joy which a man hath when he acts according to that which is beſt in him,

him, to be deadned to a vital ſenſe of his chief good, and to be deprived of the love of God, which is the very life of good men? Whatſoever intercepts the favourable Influences of God's Benignity doth as much contribute to the death of the ſoul, as he would promote the bodie's life, who by ſome fatal obſtruction of the inward paſſages ſhould hinder the communication of vital Spirits to all the parts of the body. What joy can a man have, when the indwelling God is grieved, and the Fool lives in contradiction to the connate Principles of his ſoul?

2. This brings me to the ſecond Demonſtration of the Reaſonableneſs of Repentance, becauſe

ſin

ſin is an inſolent contempt of that excellent order which God hath planted in Humane Nature, which is his Law upon it, and is the ornament and preſervation of it.

There are few who have ſo little uſe of their ſoul beſtoweds upon them, but that they know they are better than their Bodies, and that the Faculties of it do tranſcend thoſe of the ſenſual Part; and that the mind doth not only underſtand what is beſt, but hath Authority beſtowed upon it to govern the bodily Appetites, which being inferiour in Nature, and needing a Guide, ought to receive Law from it.

The

The ſoul doth diſcover, being it ſelf taught of God, by its natural light and ſuper-added Revelation, what is the happineſs to which it was made, the beſt good of which it is capable, and ſhows the means by which it may be attained, directs & aſſiſts in the uſe of them, propounds rational Arguments to perſuade to uſe and perſiſt in the uſe of them, & can baffle ſuch Objections as are raiſed, either by the homebred Enemy, or Forreign Tentations, to hinder the ſoul in its chearful progreſs towards its Felicity.

The ſoul tells us what ſatisfaction is allowable to the bodily appetites, diſtinguiſheth between lawful and unlawful, & utterly forbids the latter, and commands that there be no ex-

exceſs in the former, ſhows what Moderation is, and the benefit of it, and repreſents the miſchief as well as the ſin of exceſs, & threatens death upon the eating of all forbidden Fruit. Order is then obſerved, as it ought to be, when all the Faculties do obey this Superior, upon whom God hath beſtow'd power to diſcern Freedom of choice, and authority to command. For which reaſon ancient Philoſophers have call'd it by very agreable Names, as the Τὸ Ἡγεμονικὸν καὶ δυνάμις δεσποτική, becauſe it is the part to which is committed the guidance of all the reſt. It was called alſo Ἡνίοχος and Ἐπιβήτωρ, ἐλάτονες ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεις, ἵπποι, that which rides and governs the lower Faculties,

culties, as the Charioteer doth his Horses with Rains; because it was placed in man to guide the Affections, and conduct the Faculties of soul and body in what way they should go, and what pace, and to teach them when to rest, and when they went astray to curb their Extravagancies, and to reduce them into the right Path. It is worthy of all reasonable Beings to maintain this Dignity, and it is their Duty to see that it be not trampled upon. This made a great Philosopher say, that when a man is assaulted by any sensual Tentation, he ought Τὴν λογικὴν δύναμιν διεγείραι πρός τε τὴν φυλακὴν τ. οἰκείου ἀξιώματος, καὶ πρὸς τὴν τ φύσιν χρῆσιν τ οἰκείων ἐνεργειῶν— and so

Τὴν

Τὴν δυνάμιν λογικὴν ἀδούλευτον φυλάττειν, *i. e.* to ſtir up his rational power to defend its proper Dignity, and to ſecure the exerciſe of its Faculties according to their proper nature, and ſo to keep the Reaſon of his mind from being enſlav'd.

Who knows not that the Iraſcible Faculty which is in us will tempt us, when occaſion is offered, to anſwer Reviling with Reproach, and Wrong with Revenge? but the τὸ θεῖον is able, as *Simplicius* ſaith, μὴ ἐᾶν τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν κυνὰ ὑλακτεῖν, not to ſuffer the Dog which is in us to bark, much leſs to bite: and to return Good for Evil, both in Words and Actions, Entreating for Rudeneſs, and for Curſing,

Curſing Prayers. And for the Concupiſcible part, it can deny what it craves, it can reduce the ſenſual Appetite to that order which Nature requires, and bring it into a leſs compaſs than the juſt meaſure of Nature, if it pleaſe: and to ſhow its full Authority over all ſenſual Inclinations and Impreſſions, it can appoint what is contrary to their Tendence, and having reſolved againſt it, can put what it hath decreed in Execution, and ſo though the Inferior part rebel, it ſhows its power, being enabled by God ἀντέχειν καὶ κρατεῖν, to reſtrain it, and maintain its own Superiority.

I'ts true, bodily Objects preſented by the Senſes will enter into the

the imagination, and by ſudden Phantaſms make ſome impreſſion upon the ſoul, but the mind can caſt them out again, can withdraw it ſelf from the conſideration of them, can preſently think upon other things, and as it pleaſeth deliberate whether that which the fleſh deſires be fit to be granted or no; and if it be not, can reject it; and not only refuſe to do that which would gratifie the ſenſual part, but the quite contrary.

St. *James* ſays that *Luſt, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth ſin; and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* Tentations to ſin are preſented; if the Will embrace them, Luſt conceives; and if it goes on to action it brings forth death: but *Jam.* 1. 15

if a man reject the Allurement, and deny the conſent of his Will, and refuſe to act according to the incitations of fleſhly Appetites, the Cockatrice is killed in the ſhell, and ſo cannot live to bite and hurt.

Thus we are ſecure in the Obſervation of God's Order, which if we neglect, the miſchief of our diſregard will ſoon appear in the ill Conſequences which attend it: For God hath ſo framed the Nature of our Souls, and ſo ordered our moſt important Concerns, that we can never break his Order but we ſhall ſuffer for it. What we neglect at preſent will meet us in bad effects afterward. When a man hath ſlighted the Govern-

ment

ment of himſelf, and laid the Rains upon the neck of the Beaſt, he ſhall ſoon find himſelf ſerv'd by his unruly Paſſions, as *Hippolytus* was by his Horſes, *thrown* and *torn*. Philoſophers called inordinate Appetite πολυκέφαλον θηρίον, a Beaſt with many Heads. It is bad enough to conteſt with one Beaſt; but it is much more hazardous, when a man muſt ſcuffle with many. To this dangerous Combat a ſinner condemns himſelf: When he hath parted with his Reaſon, he hath ſubjected his mind to the command of every inſulting Appetite, and muſt comply with every fooliſh Phanſie: Being made the ſlave of ſin, he muſt, as the Apoſtle ſays, ſerve divers Luſts, and ſo muſt

needs be in a brave condition, being under the Arbitrary Command not of one Tyrannical Patron, but many, having indeed as many Lords as Luſts; and how baſely they uſe their vitious ſlaves, commanding by turns, the poor wretches feel to their grief, by the perpetual diſturbance which they receive from them; being ſometimes more then half drowned with Wine, ſometimes ſet on fire with Wrath, at other times ſwelled till they are ready to break with Pride, and often thrown into all dirty pleaſures.

I am not ignorant that ſome hardned ſinners ſay, That they feel not the pains of ſin which are ſo talked of, neither are they much con-

concerned, though they break that preciſe order which is forementioned: They are well pleaſed with the life of Senſe, and are willing to go as their Appetites lead them; they eſteem that order good enough which ſome call Hurry; though they be cenſured, yet they think themſelves well paid for what they do with fleſhly Divertiſements; and whatever Divines or Philoſophers ſay to the contrary, they ſee no cauſe to repent of their courſe.

To theſe men I ſhall only ſay two things;

1. That it is no ſign of health in a man to want feeling.

2. That there are Monſters in the World, but no Argument can be made from them againſt Nature.

1. It is no ſign of health in a man to want feeling. Is a man to be acounted well, becauſe he is in an Apoplexie, and ſo not ſenſible of what you ſay or do to him? Doth any man reckon it a perfection in his body to want feeling or any other ſenſe? The ſoul hath its Apoplexie too. A man may ſo debauch his Nature with vitious practiſes, that at laſt he ſhall be paſt feeling, and commit all filthineſs with greedineſs, as the Apoſtle ſaith. He ſins, and pleaſeth himſelf that he feels no remorſe;

Is

Is glad that he is liſted in the number of thoſe ἀπηλγηκότες. He become a whining Penitent? No, he is one of the *Fortes Eſprites*: He makes a mock of ſin. Tell him of Repentance? tell them that are weary of their lives, he is well enough. Let the ſick ſend for the Phyſician out of his Bed: He may ſleep long enough for him, he needs him not. Its ridiculous talk to ſpeak to him of a ſpiritual Guide, he can govern himſelf.

This ſeems to be well; but the Friends of a ſick perſon are much troubled, when they perceive that he is not ſenſible of pain or danger, and they take it for a ſign of approaching death; neither do they entertain any hope of life, till

they have brought him to a ſenſe of his ſickneſs & weakneſs. The Scripture tells us of a *ſeared Conſcience*, & of ſuch whoſe minds are darkned, and of a reprobate mind, an undiſcerning ſoul, and of a hardned heart as callous as a Labourer's hand, and of a heart waxen groſs, that is, a ſoul which hath no more ſenſe of God, than the fat heart of an Ox, which in other places is called the *ſpirit of ſlumber*; nothing can awake ſuch a perſon to mind his moſt important concerns. A wicked life benums a ſinner, and we are no more to regard his judgment of things, than what a blind man ſays of colours. A reprobate mind is that ſad puniſhment which God doth often inflict upon wilful ſinners;

1 Tim 4.2

Eph. 4. 18, 19.

ners. Since we know this, we need not wonder that they do not repent, though their Condition be moſt dangerous; for they underſtand it not.

2. There are Monſters in the World, but no Argument can be taken from them againſt Nature. Will any body ſay that all ſhould be as they are? Shall Error be ſet for a Rule? If one be born deformed, or wanting ſome of thoſe integral parts which make up a Body, would any that is in his Wits be willing to be conform'd to that unnatural Idea? If a man had a Child born defective in any Limb, blind, lame, or any way miſhapen; would he not think it a great favour, if it might be granted

granted to him, to have this Child born again in a handsom form, and restored to a beautiful proportion? Wise men have ever thought, that it is a greater monstrosity to be mishapen in Soul; the Mind corrupted, the Affections corrupted with Lust, and so made dishonourable to the state of Human Nature. The Holy Scripture doth very justly call this a Corruption of Human Nature; for every thing deserves that name, when it hath lost that power which is the proper Excellency of its Nature, and by which it is fitted to its End. This Degeneracy is so great, that the Holy Scripture saith, Men are degraded by it into the condition of brute Beasts, 2 *Pet.* 2, 12. and in other

2 *Tim.* 3. 9
Eph. 4. 22
Rom. 1.

other places. The Philoſophers ſaw it by the Light of Nature, and have ſpoken more highly in the caſe: *Arrian* calls them ἐν ζώοις ἀτυχήματα, *i. e.* the moſt unhappy among Beaſts —and adds, that if there be any thing ἀτυχέστερον ἢ ἀθλιώτερον, more wretched and abject, a man depraved with ſin is that. The Poets meant the ſame when they ſpoke of the Transformation of *Ulyſſes* his Companions, who by Debauchery were turned into Swine, grunting in *Circe's* Priſon, and there thruſting out their Snouts through the Grates in which they were kept Slaves. So monſtrous is the ſtate of the Soul, when it is made to truckle under every ungoverned Paſſion. *Arrian. l. 1. c. 3.*

Se-

Second Motive.

This is enough to have ſhown the reaſonableneſs of Repentance; and I might now add the danger which a ſinner incurs by Impenitence; for he makes himſelf liable to that Vengeance, which God will take for the contempt of his Orders. But before I ſpeak of that, I ſhall diſcourſe of my ſecond Motive to Repentance, which is taken from the Goodneſs of God who is willing to forgive the Penitent ſinner; and that is ſo great an Encouragement to this Duty, that the Apoſtle ſays *it leads us to Repentance.* That it doth ſo, will be ſeen plainly in the Account which

Rom. 2. 4.

which I ſhall give of it in ſix Particulars.

1. The firſt Encouragement is that Declaration which God hath made concerning his own Nature, that it is not implacable; but that he is willing to forgive thoſe who have ſinned, if they repent of their ſins. This Goodneſs of the Divine Nature God made to paſs before *Moſes*, when he deſired to ſee the the glory of theGodhead, when God proclaimed himſelf to be *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiveing iniquity tranſgreſſion and ſin.* This glorious Name was given, as that by which God was willing to be *Exod.* 34,5,6.

be known to the World; and it doth give us notice of that which doth moſt concern us to know of the Deity.

God by his Royal Prerogative hath power to forgive, if he pleaſe. By right of Creation he is the Sovereign Rector of the World. He who made all things, muſt need have authority to give them Law; it is fit that all Creatures ſhould obey him who gave them their Being. As he hath power to give Law; ſo alſo to threaten in caſe of Diſobedience, and ſo he only is *Dominus pœnarum*: the puniſhment of ſin is ſolely at his appointment; for whatſoever miſchief ſin may do in the Conſequences of it to others, it is his Law which is violated by it,

it, it is his Authority which is affronted.

But as God hath only right to puniſh; ſo, if he pleaſe, it is his Prerogative not to puniſh. His Threatnings are Conditional, and ſo in themſelves capable of Relaxation. He may depart from his Right, if he will, and forgive us what we are not able to pay. He may paſs by thoſe wrongs for which we can never make him amends, as indeed we cannot for one Sin; For, as *Daniel* ſaid, *To the Lord our God belong Mercies and Forgiveneſs, though we have rebelled againſt him.* Dan. 9. 9. As it his Royal Prerogative, that he can forgive; ſo it is his Divine Benignity, that he is willing to do it. The goodneſs of

of God, for which we conſtantly adore him, is a voluntary propenſion of the Divine Nature to do good to his Creatures according to their ſeveral Capacities; and he hath a particular Love to Mankind, which makes him willing to promote their Happineſs; and as ſin is the only hindrance of that, he hath declared his love by his willingneſs to prevent the miſchievous effects of it by forgiveneſs. Here the Divine goodneſs doth magnifie it ſelf againſt our wickedneſs, the Divine Wiſdom finds a way to ſave the Offender from the ruin of his own Folly, and God's Juſtice ſhows it ſelf wiſe and good, not reaching after that ſatisfaction which cannot

cannot be had, to wit, not requiring that the Offence be undone, for that cannot be; nor yet ſeeking the utmoſt which may be had, which is, that the ſinner be deſtroyed; but is content with ſuch a Reparation as may be made of the Divine Honour by Repentance, by which ſin is extirpated, and the ſinner ſaved.

I have ſpoken of this Particular more largely, to fix a right Notion of the temper of the Deity in mens Souls. It is no ſmall comfort to us that we know God is not neceſſitated to execute his Threatnings, and that he is of ſo Benign a Nature, that he is willing to part with his Right, rather than ruin his Creatures.

This is a mighty Encouragement to Repentance, and ſhould make every ſinner ſay, as the Prophet did, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his Heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy.* Art thou ſo good, though I have been ſo bad? I will rebel no more; I hope in thy Mercy, I will return.

Micah. 7. 18.

We read that *Benhadad* and his great Army invaded *Iſrael*; and when they were beaten, the very Report that the Kings of *Iſrael* were merciful, made them come with Sackcloth upon their Loyns, and Ropes about their Necks, ſuing for Pardon with all the ſigns of Pe-

1 *Kings* 20.30.

Penitence and Submiſſion. We are told alſo in the Story of *Auguſtus Cæſar*, That there was one *Corocotta*, a *Spaniſh* Thief, ſo famous for doing Miſchief, that the Emperor promiſed Ten thouſand *Seſterces* to him that ſhould bring him alive into his preſence. Here upon *Corocotta* fearing his danger if he continued his Courſe, and having heard of the generous temper of *Auguſtus*, carried himſelf to him. It could not be the hope of the price ſet upon his head that could make him do ſo; for what pleaſure can a man take in telling money, when he is going to be hanged? but the hope of Pardon, which he obtained, and by the Nobleneſs of *Cæſar*, the money too.

Sure the Report which we have
Eph. 2. 4. heard of God, that he *is rich in Mercy*, ſhould encourage us to bring the Penitent Rebel into his preſence, and throw him proſtrate before his Footſtool. The Throne is a Seat of Grace, and the King who ſits upon it is the Father of Mercies. If we repent we may come boldly, and have a good hope to find favour.

Princes do invite rebellious Subjects many times to lay down their Arms by offering Acts of Oblivion, and it uſually prevails; but however it may be the Wiſdom as well as Clemency of Princes, to offer pardon, becauſe they know no better way to overcome ſturdy Rebels: But the Argument

is

is more cogent to make ſinners repent, when God offers pardon, becauſe he is Almighty, & ſo needs no Arts to reduce the Obſtinate; he can deſtroy them when he pleaſeth; what he offers is mere Grace; he would not have them periſh through their fooliſh wilfulneſs: would he not? O then, Rebel Heart, wilt thou not ἀυτομολεῖν πρὸς Θεὸν, as *Clem. Alexandr.* ſays, wilt thou not run away from thy diſobedient Party? If thou hadſt been ſhut up in Deſpair, as the Devils are, impriſon'd and made to know that thou wert reſerved in Chains without hope, till the Judgment of the great Day, thou mighteſt have ſome colour for the hardneſs of thy heart; but now,

when Grace is not denied, if thou repenteſt not thou wilt have nothing to ſay for thy ſelf.

2. Eſpecially ſince God hath aſſured thee by an Oath, That he
Ezek.33. 11. *delights not in the death of ſinners*, nor is pleaſed with the ruin of ſuch as have rebelled againſt him. *As I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* According to that of
2 Pet.3.9. St. *Peter*, He is *not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*: And that of St.
1 Tim.2.4. *Paul*, He *would have all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.*

It's true, the Heathens painted the Godhead after a wild ſort, making

king their Pagods in diſmal ſhapes of grim Monſters, armed with Claws and Teeth; Pictures not unfit to repreſent thoſe Devils whom they worſhipped. Who having ſhown their Enmity to God in making his Creatures Idolaters, declared alſo their Malice to Men, by making Cruelty a great part of their Worſhip: not only whilſt they forced them to tear their Skin with their Nails, and cut their Fleſh with Knives, as the Worſhippers of *Baal* did, of whom wa read 1 *Kings* 18.28. and as other Idolaters did, of whom we read in Heathen Authors; but made them *ſacrifice their Sons and Daughters to Devils:* or as in the next Verſe, *to the Idols of Canaan*, in whom they *Pſa.* 106. *v.* 38.

were worſhipped, and whoſe bloody Rites they appointed: They made their Children paſs through the Fire to *Moloch*; whether they made them periſh miſerably in the hollow breaſt of a burning Image, or drew them ſo long between two Fires that they died, the Cruelty was ſo great, that they were fain to ſtifle the ſound of their dreadful Shrieks with the noiſe of Drums. This was the ſenſe and practiſe of the Eaſtern World; and the Weſt was not unlike to it, for to one Idol of *America*, *Vitzliputſli*, they offered in ſome ſolemn Sacrifices many thouſands of Men and Women flay'd alive, their breaſts being cut open, and their warm hearts taken out and preſented to the bloody

bloody Idol. How far our God is from that temper, he hath ſufficiently declared, ſince inſtead of making us all dreadful Examples of juſt Vengeance in our own perſons, he gave his own dear Son to die for us.

That bleſſed Son was of the ſame temper too, as you may ſee in that part of his Story which is recorded *Luke* 18.41. in which we are told of his approach to *Jeruſalem*, not long before his death, where foreſeeing that great Change, which for their ſins their then flouriſhing Eſtate ſhould in a ſhort time ſuffer, it is ſaid, *he wept over it. Wept over it?* They had given him cauſe to *inſult* over them, they were as bad as ſinners could be. They had

had rejected him the Meſſiah, the great promiſe of God to their Nation, who came to them according to all the prefigurations and predictions which were given to their Fathers: they acknowledged Miracles to be a ſufficient Teſtimony of God's mind, and yet diſbelieved him who gave them that proof: they ſcorned the Doctrine of perfect Goodneſs which he taught, and yet confeſſed, that *never man ſpake as he ſpake*: they deſpiſed the unparalleld Example of all Vertues which he gave in his life, and put him to death who had done them all the good he could whilſt he lived—yet knowing that for theſe things in a while they ſhould be puniſhed with inexpreſſible Miſeries,

ries, the foresight made his tears fall from his eyes; and to these he added his blood, for he died for those who killed him, and joyned his Prayers to it for the pardon of such as had made him as miserable as they could. After this how can any sinner be afraid of God, if he repent?

3. The third Enconragement is, That God hath by all manner of Invitations called sinners to Repentance. The Scripture abounds with frequent Exhortations to this Duty, and Declarations of God's desire of mens Return; sometimes it records his Expostulations with the Obstinate, whom he also beseecheth by his Servants, and sometimes bad them in his Name

Name to command ſinners to ſave themſelves this way.

Exhortations we find often in the Sermons of the Prophets, whom he ſent of old, riſing early, and ſitting up late, to warn ſinners of
Matth. 3. their danger, and charged the blood of ſuch as periſhed upon them, if they did not do it. This was the firſt Sermon of our Savi-
Mark 1. our's Forerunner, and his own, *Repent, and believe the Goſpel.*

How deſirous God was always of this in his Creatures, theſe, among many other Expreſſions, give
Deut. 5. 29. witneſs—*Oh that there were ſuch an heart in them, that they would fear me, that it might be well with them! O*
32. 29. *that they were wiſe, that they would*
Pſal. 81. 31. *underſtand! O that my people had hearkened*

hearkened to me! O that thou hadſt known in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace! He expoſtulates with them, *Why will ye die?* and by his Servants beſeecheth them— *We are Ambaſſadours for Chriſt*, as though God did beſeech you by us, *We pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.* And he commands *all men every where to repent.*

Luke 19. 42.

Ezek. 18. 31.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

Act. 17. 30.

4. To perfect this Encouragement, he hath aſſured pardon to the Penitent by many plain Promiſes, in which God's goodneſs is obliged by his Truth; which being made, the Apoſtle ſaid well, that now, *God is faithful and juſt to forgive ſinners.* The Benignity of the Divine Nature is a good encou-

couragement; but when that hath declared it ſelf in particular promiſes enſured by God's Veracity, we have firm grounds of Hope, plain meaſures of Expectation, and he which doth not give credit unto them, *makes God a lyar*, as St. *John* ſays; puts the ſame contempt upon God which men do upon the words of vain perſons, who never mean what they ſay, or are unable to perform what they promiſe. Without this Revelation a Heathen could ſay, *Qui deſperat Deum exaſperat, nec bonum credit*, i.e. He which deſpairs makes God angry, and doth not believe him to be good. After all this wilt thou not repent?

Petron.

5. Eſpe-

5. Eſpecially when God hath given a mighty Demonſtration of his full purpoſe to fulfil what he hath promiſed to penitent ſinners, not only declaring theſe Promiſes by his dear ſon, but by making him

1. A Sacrifice of Expiation for ſinners in his Death, and
2. Alſo an Advocate for them ſince his Reſurrection.

1. God hath made him a Sacrifice of Expiation in his Death. An Expiatory Sacrifice is when one ſuffers for another, and ſo ſaves the other from ſuffering; when Body

Body is given for Body, Life for Life. Such was our Saviour's Paſſion for ſinners: And therefore
1 Tim. 2. 6. the Apoſtle ſaid, *He gave himſelf* Ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, *a ranſom for all men*; Or as our Saviour ſaid
Matth. 20. 28. himſelf, Λύτρον, *a Ranſom for many*. He gave his Life as ſuch a price, by which Captives or Slaves are ſet at Liberty; and therefore
Gal. 3. 13. he is ſaid to have *redeemed us from the Curſe, being made a Curſe for us*: Ἐξηγόρασε, He bought us off with a great price from the Curſe due to our ſins, being himſelf content to be uſed for our ſakes as one who is accurſed. What worſe things could happen to any mortal man, than thoſe which Chriſt ſuffered? His Death was eſteemed by

by all men as the moſt infamous and moſt painful, and was looked upon by the Eternal Father as the common Penance of Mankind, for whom he ſuffered it.

Thus our Saviour became our Ἀντίψυχος, *gave his life for ours*; and we have (ἀπολύτρωσις) *Redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of our ſins*; Yes, *through his blood*: For he nail'd our Bond to his Croſs, and ſo cancel'd it, and freed us from our Debt. Thus hath God been willing to let us know, how unwilling he is to puniſh us if we repent. Though it be of the nature of puniſhment that it be inflicted for ſin, yet it is not neceſſary that it ſhould be upon the perſon offending, if the offended will accept of another to

Eph. 1. 7.

Col. 3. 12.

ſuffer for him, and ſo free him. This is our Caſe; for God was pleaſed to accept of the Temporal Death of his dear Son, to free all penitent ſinners from Death Eternal.

2. I need not proſecute this comfortable Argument any further; God hath by it abundantly ſignified his mind to relieve trembling ſinners, having made his Son a Propitiation for them in his Death, and declared alſo that he is an Advocate for them ſince his Reſurrection. 1 Joh. 2. 1. *If any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father.* Παράκλητος in this place ſignifies one who deprecates Anger, mitigates Wrath, begs pardon for ſuch as have offended. The Deſign of the

the Goſpel is to preſerve us from ſin; but if one chance to fall into ſin, leſt he ſin alſo into Deſpair, it gives this encouragement to riſe by Repentance, becauſe we have an Advocate with the Father, the Son of God, who intercedes for us, pleads our cauſe in Heaven. This Encouragement is great upon many accounts;

1. Becauſe long before his Incarnation he was deſigned to that merciful Office by the Eternal Father: So we read in *Iſaiah* (which the Evangeliſt *Mark* applies to our Saviour) *He ſhall make Interceſſion for Tranſgreſſors*, deprecate the Divine Anger for them, appear in the preſence of God for them. It is a great ſatis- *Iſ.* 53. 12.

faction to all thoughtful minds, that they are aſſured of the truth of his Commiſſion: We are ignorant upon what grounds ſome have beſtowed this part of his Mediation upon Saints or Angels. The Scripture hath told us that *Abraham knows us not, and that Iſrael is ignorant of us, and that no man taketh to him the honour of mediating for others with God, but he that is called of God.* But we have great hope in this one Mediator, becauſe God hath given him the honour to ſtand at his Right Hand, and plead for ſinners. He is the great *Angelus Orationis*, as I think *Tertullian* called him; who, when the prayers of Saints goes up to Heaven, puts in his Merits to make them acceptable.

*Iſ.*63.16.

Heb. 5.4.

table. As for others, alas, poor Souls! they have no merits to make their own Prayers ſweet, and how then ſhall they perfume thoſe of others?

2. This our Advocate was always, and is the moſt beloved Son of God. He dwelt eternally in the Boſom of the Father; a phraſe which ſignifies Intimacy and Love. He is one to whom the Father never denied any thing: ſo he ſaid himſelf, *I know that thou heareſt me always.*

3. It is a great Encouragement that we have ſuch an Advocate, who by his Death merited a juſt Right to intercede with God for ſinners. He might well pray for pardon, who offered himſelf a

Sacrifice of Expiation, and demand the Releaſe of Captives for whom he had paid the Ranſom.

We are not to think that in Heaven our Saviour prays for ſinners, offering up cries with tears for them; but intercedes with the Authority of Mediation, which he obtained by his Death. He appears in the preſence of God for us, offering great Reaſons for our pardon.

4. To this add, that he hath, whilſt he doth this, ſtrong deſires in himſelf to have us made partakers of it. We are told that he is a merciful High Prieſt in things pertaining to God; and that he is willing to make Reconciliation for us: not like the Maſters of Requeſts

queſts in this World, who many times are ſo hard to come at, that it is eaſier to get a Petition granted by the King, than preſented by his Servant. No; he is ſo merciful, that he hath bid us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, and to *Heb.* 4. 16. be confident that we ſhall obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need; we may come μετὰ παῤῥησίας, freely declare our caſe to God, have free acceſs to him for that purpoſe, and we ſhall not be turned away with ſhame, as peo- 1 *Joh.* 2. 18. ple are when their Petitions are ſlighted.

This goodneſs of our Saviour's Temper is an inward Advocate for us, always dwelling in his Breaſt, making him willing to receive the

Petitions which we offer to him, and alſo to preſent them to the Eternal Father, and to add to them what may make them acceptable. He ſhow'd his benign Diſpoſition before he left this World, in that kind Excuſe which he made for the neglect of his Friends, who failed him in a time when he much needed their Service. For though he reproved them for their fault — *What? could you not watch with me one hour in this my great Agony?* yet he mercifully both told them their Danger, and how to avoid it, and made ſome Excuſe for them, ſaying, *The Spirit is willing, but the Fleſh weak.* Beſides this, he plainly ſhowed his good Temper, when upon the Croſs he deprecated the Ven-

Matt. 26. 40, 41.

Vengeance of the Eternal Father, and prayed it might not fall upon ſuch as had ſufficiently deſerved it. Theſe Conſiderations do give vaſt encouragement to ſinners to repent, ſince by them they ſee how eaſily they may come to Mercy.

To which I ſhall only add one more, which is, That God hath declared himſelf highly pleaſed when ſinners do repent, and accept of his pardon. For this take our Saviour's word, *I ſay unto you, that there is great joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth.* Luke 15. 10. This our Saviour further expreſſeth in the Parable of the Prodigal, which follows in the ſame Chapter; for when he came back

back from his vicious Courſe, it is ſaid there, That *his Father, when he was afar off, had compaſſion on him, ran to meet him, fell on his Neck and kiſſed him*, that is, gave him all ſigns of Reconciliation, & expreſſed all decent Joy for his Return, in killing the *fatted Calf* to make him a Feaſt, and adding Muſick and Dancing to make it pleaſant. Though theſe things are ſpoken ἀνθρωποπαθῶς· yet we think worthily and rightly of God, when by ſuch Expreſſions we underſtand how acceptable our Repentance is to him, and by that are moved to repent.

And now upon the forementioned Conſiderations, how can the ſinner but fall upon his knees, and ſay?

ſay? O Lord, I am ſenſible of my folly, I am pain'd with my guilt; I am ſo obnoxious to thy wrath, that if thou ſhouldſt mark my ſin in order to puniſhment, I know I ſhould not be able to abide it; but I ſee *there is mercy with thee that thou mayſt be feared*; thy *goodneſs leads me to Repentance*, and I will follow its gentle conduct, and return to thee: And thus I make my Prayer; O Lord, though I moſt juſtly deſerve to be condemned, yet I beſeech thee not to condemn me. What profit is there in my Blood? Behold, I offer thee for my Ranſom a better Life than my own, that of thy dear Son: and ſince thou didſt commend thy Love to mankind, that he ſhould

die

die for ſinners; O grant me part in that Love. Since thou waſt pleaſed to make to meet upon him the Iniquities of us all, lay mine upon him I beſeech thee. It is eaſier for thee to pardon my ſins, than to have given thy dear Son to be a Sacrifice for them. He hath more pleaſed thee by his Obedience, than I have grieved thee by my Diſobedience. The voice of his Blood cries lowder for pardon, than my ſins for vengeance. Since thy beloved Son died for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification; ſince thou haſt reconciled me to thee by his death, now much more let me be ſaved by his life.

And,

And, O bleſſed Jeſus, ſince thou didſt not refuſe to die for my ſins, I pray thee that I may not die for them too. After thy Incarnation thou didſt declare that thou cameſt not to be miniſtred unto, but to ſerve others, and (O unexpreſſible kindneſs!) to give thy life a Ranſom for many; it is ſufficient for the ſins of all the World; leave not mine out I beſeech thee, but let me be one of the Redeemed made happy by thee, becauſe thou madeſt thy Soul an Offering for their ſins. Thou waſt pleaſed, among thy Titles of Glory, to take this of a Saviour; and as thou didſt not then deſpiſe that merciful Office, ſo neither art thou yet weary of it; Save me, even me

me alſo, I pray thee, and ſay unto my Soul, that thou art my ſalvation. It is long ago that thou didſt call to thee all ſuch as are *weary and heavy laden*, I am one of thoſe, O Lord, my ſins ly heavy upon me like a load of Sand, and without thy help the Burden will grow intolerable; I beſeech thee, according to thy gracious promiſe, to take it off and give me eaſe, *O Lamb of God, who takeſt away the ſins of the World.*

Thou waſt pleaſed in the days of thy Fleſh to pity the miſeries of ſinners; Thy Compaſſion is not withered; thy pity is not dried up, it extends it ſelf from Generation to Generation; thou ſheweſt mercy to thouſands, and ſaveſt

to

to the utmoſt of all times all that come unto God by thee: I come unto the Eternal Father hoping in thy mediation; ſave me I beſeech thee, O Prince of pity.

Thou didſt command thy Servants to preach Repentance and Remiſion of ſins in thy Name, and didſt pray for ſuch as ſhould believe in thee through their Word; I am one of thoſe, moſt merciful Jeſus, let the benefit of thy prayer reach me alſo. Thou undertookeſt to make Interceſſion for ſinners, and didſt beg their Releaſe, as well thou mighteſt, for thou didſt pay their Debt; O pray for me alſo, moſt merciful Advocate. When thou wenteſt into thy Glory, thou didſt not leave

leave the Remembrance of poor Souls behind thee, but didſt let them know before thy departure hence, that thou waſt going to appear in the preſence of God for them; remember me too now thou art in thy Kingdom, O Lover of Souls, who ever liveſt to make Interceſſion.

Before I proceed to the laſt Motive, leſt the former ſhould miſs their deſired Effect, I will ſtay here, and briefly anſwer two Objections, which without any juſt ground ſome have made to their own hinderance in this Affair.

1. One ſaith, That notwithſtanding all which hath been diſcourſed concerning the goodneſs of God, yet I do not know whether

ther he intends any kindneſs towards me in his Declarations, becauſe he may by ſome ſecret will have debarred me from having any benefit by them.

2. Another ſaith, It may be God would pardon me if I did repent; but what am I better for that, ſince I find in my ſelf no power to repent?

1. To the firſt; After all that full Declaration which God hath made of his goodneſs, doſt thou doubt his Reality? And though he hath affirmed his readineſs to ſave, doſt thou think that by ſome hidden Will he hath reſolved thy Damnation? Let me then ſay to thee, in the words of a late Divine of this Church —*O thou Hypocrite!*

becauſe thou haſt two wills, one in thy Words, and another in thy mind, doſt thou think that God hath ſo too? that he ſpeaks one thing, and means another? That he hath a ſecret will contradictory to his revealed? If it be ſecret, how cameſt thou to know it? No; thou art wicked in making God a lyar and diſſembler like thy ſelf. So he. I will add, That ſuch blaſphemous words, without Repentance, will be ſeverely accounted for one day; and that God will reprove thee, and ſet this, among thy other ſins, in order before thee. Leave of theſe vile Imaginations, and never let it enter into thy mind to think, that God hath declared one thing to men in his Word, and hath decreed another con-

concerning them in himself. He is the God of Truth; and therefore repent, and trust in his mercy.

2. To the other, Who says he would, but hath no power to Repent, and so looks upon the goodness of God in forgiving the Penitent as not available to him, I answer; That it is true, since our fall we cannot return to God by our own weak power; but that is no Excuse for Impenitence, because God is ready to supply that Defect with the Assistance of his Grace. God was pleased to *Act.* 5. 31. make his dear Son a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins; not only to pardon sinners upon their repentance, but to give

them grace to enable them to repent, and ſo obtain pardon. This grace may be had for aſking — *He will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* It is the good pleaſure of him who hath commanded us to will and do what we ought, to enable us to will and do what we ought.

Luke 11. 13.

Phil. 2.

This aſſiſtance of the Divine grace I ſhall expreſs in St. *Auguſtine*'s words, *Non in eo divinitus adjuvamur ad operandam juſtitiam, quod Legem Deus dedit plenam bonis præceptis; ſed quod ipſa voluntas noſtra, ſine qua operari bonum non poſſumus, adjuvatur & erigitur impartito Spiritu Gratiæ*; *i.e.* we are not divinely aſſiſted to the working of Righteouſneſs in this, that God hath given

De lit. & ſpir. c. 12.

given us a Law full of good Precepts; but becauſe our Will, without which we cannot do good, is helpt and erected by the Spirit of grace beſtowed upon us.

It is a great favour, that God hath been pleaſed to give us his Goſpel, which St. *Paul* calls χάρις σωτήριος, ſaving grace; It ſhows the way of Salvation to us: by it we are made to underſtand the moſt important concerns of our ſouls; that ſhows us the gracious conditions of our pardon, and lays before us ſtrong Reaſons to convince us of the neceſſity of our complyance with what God hath propounded, if we wil be happy, and demonſtrates the reaſonableneſs of Obedience. But God is

pleased also to invigorate his Gospel Methods with the gracious Operation of his benign Spirit, which makes a Divine Light shine into the Mind, clears up the mist of Ignorance which lay upon it before, and makes us know the things which belong to our peace; awakens our Consciences, and makes us apprehensive of the danger of sin, and affrights us with the truth of Divine Threatnings; makes us consider heavenly Motives, opens
Act. 16. 14 our hearts, as it did *Lydia*'s, to attend to the things which are spoken to us, and inclines us to comply with the reason of them; it raiseth our wills out of sloth and languor by a secret ardor of life conveyed into our Souls, λόγοις οἷς

οἷς οἶδε Θεὸς, by ways which God knows, as St. *Basil* saith, and so puts into our minds good Desires, and makes us begin to feel in our Souls a hunger after Righteousness; it melts us with the Love of God and his dear Son, makes us ashamed to sin any more, and comforts us with the hope of Pardon and Restoration to the Divine Favour, and so conjures us by potent Arguments to enter into the Bands of the Covenant, and perswades us to submit thankfully to the terms of the Gospel.

Thus our blessed Saviour stands at the Door and knocks; thus the heavenly Father draws us to his Son: and the sinner should say— I find the gracious Spirit of God

Rev. 3. 20. *Jo.* 6. 44.

leading me towards the Land of the Living. I will reſign my ſelf to his Conduct, I will be led by him, I will *follow the Lamb whereſoever he goes.* Doth my Saviour vouchſafe to knock at my Door? I am infinitely beholden to him, I will open to him, I will let him in, and give him the poſſeſſion of my Soul.

This is the Divine grace, and it is our Duty to make a careful uſe of it; and then we ſhall have more to help us to perfect what is well begun. A ready complyance with ſuch merciful Aſſiſtance is highly requiſite; for if we reſiſt God's kind Motions, and ſlight the help beſtowed, we may fruſtrate the deſign of his Mercy a-

gainſt

gainſt our ſelves, and make that grace ineffectual which would have ſaved us, if we had improved it with our concurrent endeavours.

We muſt not expect that God ſhould pull us out of a ſtate of ſin, and drag us into a ſtate of vertue by an irreſiſtible force: God is pleaſed in Converſion to draw us towards himſelf by the Cords of a Man, by ſuch Arguments as we underſtand to be moſt reaſonable, and by ſuch Motives as are apt to perſwade ſuch as will conſider, and by the gentle Swaſions of his good Spirit, with the Cords of Love, and the Bands of Kindneſs. We muſt not think that God ſhould act upon us to the extent of his Omnipotence,

but

but according to his Wiſdom. He knows what help is ſufficient for us, and how fit it is that we ſhould thankfully uſe what is enough, without aſking what is too much. He takes what method he pleaſeth in the diſpenſing of his grace, which we are not to appoint, but obeſerve. Our Duty is to accept of ſufficient grace, and uſe it, that we may be converted, and not teach God how to convert us.

God was always diſpleaſed with men, when neglecting the kindneſs which he ſhowed them, they would preſcribe him methods for the communication of his goodneſs.

When

When the Iſraelites were led through the Wilderneſs, they were well enough provided for by God's care, and ſhould have been not only content, but thankful: they were neither; but lothing the Bread of Heaven, which God had appointed for them, they would have Quails. They had them; but they had better have been without them: for God was angry at their rude unthankfulneſs — For the limited the Holy One of *Iſrael.* They would not only be provided for, but in ſuch a way as they themſelves ſhould deſcribe. *Pſ.* 78. 41.

We have a very good account of this matter in that excellent Parable of *Iſaiah*, where God ſpeaking of the Jewiſh people, whom he calls *Iſa.* 5.

calls his Vineyard, ſaith, That he planted it in a fat Soyl, hedged it, that is, guarded it with his Providence, ſet a Vine which was generous, gave them excellent Laws, the teachings of inſpired men, and the aſſiſtances of his grace, and all ſufficient means to promote their bringing forth Fruit anſwerable to his Care: But after all, inſtead of good Grapes, they brought forth wild Grapes; God was diſpleaſed, and for the Juſtice of his Anger he appealed to the Judgment and Conſcience of thoſe who had ſlighted his Favours, and ſaid, What could I have done more to my Vineyard than I have done? I have done what I thought fit for me to do, and beſtowed what I thought enough

enough for them to receive, and becauſe they have made me no anſwerable Returns, I will take away my Hedge, and lay them waſte.

Now ſinner, take heed what will become of thee, and have a care of Folly in pretending to teach God what he might have done more for thee, and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, according to the grace beſtowed. Remember the Fig-tree in the Goſpel, which having no Fruit upon it when our Saviour ſought it, was curſed and withered: And take St. *Chryſoſt.* counſel concerning it; *We were beaten in this type, thou art frighted in this tree, thou art inſtructed, to thee is given wholſome Admonition; prevent the coming of the Lord with good Fruits:* *Matth.* 21. 18.

What

What God expects from thee let him find, let him have what he deſires, leſt what happened to this Tree from God, happen to thee alſo. It is not fit for ſinners to diſpute concerning grace, but to make uſe of it, and repent.

2. Of this they ought to be more careful, becauſe God doth allow fair ſpace of time to make uſe of the grace beſtowed; he repeats his methods of Salvation, and ſometimes alters them, which is a great demonſtration of his benignity, and ought to move us effectually to make uſe of it. Though the Divine Spirit will not always ſtrive with men, yet he continues his merciful Conteſt a great while. Though ſinners be dull in apprehending, and careleſs in the conſideration

ſideration of grace offered; yet God is not preſently weary, but waits to ſee if at laſt they will underſtand. It is mentioned as a great Favour which God beſtowed upon the *Canaanites*, that he did not deſtroy them at once, though they highly deſerved it, but gave them ſpace for Repentance. *Thou didſt puniſh the condemned with deliberation, giving them time and place whereby they might be delivered from* their malice. God is pleaſed to lengthen the tranquility of ſinners, as *Daniel* ſaith, and ſo gives opportunity to make uſe of grace not only offered, but for ſome conſiderable time ſlighted, that ſo they might be ſaved, if they will yet make uſe of his Favour before their hearts

Wiſd. 12. 20.

hearts are quite hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.

Iſa. We read of the Jews in the Wilderneſs, that they vexed the Holy Spirit with their Diſobedience; yet we read, that he bore with their ill *Act.* 13. 18. manners (ἐτροποφόρησε) 40 years, and ſo gave them fair ſpace to repent of their Ingratitude, and ſo ſave their Souls, though their Carkaſes fell in the Deſart. After they were come to *Canaan* he uſed the *2 Chron.* 36. 15, 16. ſame Patience, ſending his Prophets, riſing up early and ſending them, becauſe he had compaſſion on his People — and this he did till there was no remedy. This ſame gentleneſs did our Saviour uſe towards them in the days of his Fleſh, which made him ſay, when

when his grace was ſlighted, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how oft would I have gathered thy Children together, as a Hen doth gather her Brood under her Wings, and ye would not?* Luke 13. 34. The ſame gracious patience doth he expreſs towards us ſtill. How oft hath God warned us by our Spiritual Guides, and the Checks of our own Conſciences? How oft hath he adviſed us by ſuch, whoſe known Prudence and great Charity was moſt likely to have made their counſel acceptable? How mercifully hath he tim'd his Propoſals, taking ſuch ſeaſons in which we were in a temper moſt likely to be wrought upon, both when our hearts were ſoftned with the ſenſe of ſome merciful Providences,

dences, and melted with kindneſs, the ſparks of Ingenuity being blown up into a flame, or when ſickneſs or ſome great affliction had ſhaken off our Careleſneſs, made us ſee great reaſon to think, and ſhown us neceſſity to hearken to advice?

Shall not the forementioned Aſſiſtances, granted with ſo much patience, make the ſinner ſay? O Lord, I am that barren Fig-tree to which thou mighteſt have ſaid long ago, *Never fruit grow on thee*: (O heavy Curſe!) How oft have I given thee cauſe to ſay, *Cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground?* And when I have begged that thou wouldſt ſtay another year, and promiſed to dig about it, and did not;

O

O Lord, thou haſt not cut me down, but ſpared me one year, and another, and another. I thank thee, and now I will abuſe thy goodneſs no longer. I will dig about it with prayers, ſighs, faſting, and watching; I will water it with my tears, and endeavour that it may bring forth fruit anſwerable to thy juſt expectation. O fooliſh Soul! Is it nothing to play with Divine Patience, and to make God ſtand by whilſt thou entertaineſt thy ſelf with every trifling Vanity? O merciful Lord, how many years have I grieved thee in this Wilderneſs? How long haſt thou born with my manners? How oft have I given thee cauſe to ſay to me as once thou didſt, being

neglected by thy ſleepy Spouſe, who ſlumbred whilſt thou ſtoodeſt knocking, and made thee ſuffer
Cant. 5. 2. the Injuries of the weather, *My Head is filled with Dew, and my Locks with the Drops of the Night, before thou couldſt have admittance?* There are many beſides the *Gadarens*, who have turned thee out of their Coaſts by their rudeneſs; O Lord, I am one of them, I confeſs it with ſhame. But, O bleſſed Jeſus, go not from me, though I deſerve it. Return according to thy Infinite goodneſs; I will ever watch, I will never permit the Door of my Soul to be ſhut againſt thee.

The

The Third Motive.

3. The third Motive to Repentance is taken from that extreme misery which doth await the Impenitent, and will unavoidably fall upon them. This is told us plainly, *Thinkeſt thou this, O Man, that judgeſt them who do ſuch things, and doeſt the ſame, that thou ſhalt eſcape the Judgment of God? Or deſpiſeſt thou the Riches of his Goodneſs, and forbearance, and long ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to Repentance? But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up to thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of Wrath and Revelation of the* Rom. 2. 3, 4, 5.

righteous Judgment of God.

The goodneſs of God, as I have ſhown, leads the ſinner to Repentance, and ſo to Happineſs by Pardon. This goodneſs he deſpiſeth, and maintains in himſelf the hardneſs of an impenitent heart, a heart that will not relent, But thinkeſt thou this, O man, that ſo doing thou canſt eſcape the Judgment of God? No; thou doſt but treaſure up wrath to thy ſelf againſt the day of Wrath. Every ſinner hath his meaſure for Iniquity, and the Impenitent fills it up; God alſo hath his Storehouſe for Vengeance, and the obſtinate ſinner doth there lay up wrath againſt himſelf. At preſent this is a hidden Treaſure, but

it

it ſhall be opened in the day of Wrath, when God will reveal the Righteouſneſs of his Judgment upon ſuch as would not repent.

God hath always declared this to be the laſt ſtate of obdurate ſinners; *He will wound the head of his Enemies, and the hairy Scalp of ſuch a one as goes on ſtill in his wickedneſs.* Long before this it was ſaid plainly by *Moſes, If it come to paſs, when he heareth the words of this Curſe, that he bleſs himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt; The Lord will not ſpare him, but then the Anger of the Lord and his Jealouſie ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the Curſes that are* Pſ. 68. 21. Deu. 29. 19, 20.

written in this Book ſhall lie upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his Name from under Heaven. He that deſpiſeth the methods of God's grace, and continues his Diſobedience, and yet perſwades himſelf that all ſhall be well with him, doth highly provoke God. The Hope of the Diſobedient is a great part of their Diſobedience; for it is a preſumptuous believing againſt the expreſs Declarations of God's Will, and they ſhall be puniſhed for it as an aggravation of their other ſins. Such people ſlight the Divine Threatnings, diſbelieve the Truth and Power of God concerning their performance; but they ſhall pay dear for it, eſpecially in the great day of Wrath,

Wrath, when Chriſt will come in flaming Fire to render Vengeance to thoſe who acknowledge God no better, and do wilfully diſobey his Goſpel.

This miſery is dreadful, becauſe the Sufferings, to which the Impenitent will be condemned, are ſo great, that now they would be intolerable, but which then they ſhall be made to endure. Of this I ſhall give account,

1. By a brief Rehearſal of the Deſcriptions of them which we find in Holy Scripture.
2. By the deep Impreſſions which they will make upon the ſpirits of damned Im-

Impenitents, of which we are told in Holy Writ.

3. By ſetting down four particular Notices, which we have received concerning the dreadfulneſs of that ſtate.

1. By a brief Rehearſal of the Deſcriptions of the miſery of Impenitents, which we find recorded in Holy Scripture. It hath pleaſed God to expreſs the future Torments of Impenitent Souls, by taking reſemblances from the bodily pains with which they are now acquainted; and hath choſen the moſt ſharp of thoſe which men ſuffer on Earth, to be Emblems of thoſe far greater which they

they ſhall ſuffer in Hell. I ſhall name a few of them.

Sometimes that miſerable Condition is deſcribed by the Torment of Fire, than which nothing is more ſharp; which is called *Matth.* 5. 22. *Hell Fire*; which, *Chap.* 13. 49, 50. is called *a Furnace of Fire, into which the wicked ſhall be caſt in the end of the World*; and *Rev.* 21. 8. *a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone*, into which ſeveral ſorts of ſinners there named ſhall be thrown; *Heb.* 10. 27. it is called Πυρὸς ζῆλος, which is tranſlated *Fiery Indignation*, becauſe of the fierceneſs of Divine Vengeance. This is terrible, and therefore ſuch as are obnoxious to it are there ſaid to be under

der a *fearful expectation of Judgment.*

It was a pain unſpeakably dreadful which thoſe old ſinners endured, who were incloſed in *Sodom*, and made to periſh in the noyſom ſmoke of Brimſtone, and the unſupportable Torment of Fire: But that is nothing to that which will be kindled in Hell, where the Fire will never go out, nor the Perſons who are burnt in it ever be conſumed.

Sometimes this Puniſhment is
Matth. 9.44. called the *Gnawing of the never dying Worm*; ſometimes it is repreſented by *utter Darkneſs*, which ſignifies the utmoſt diſconſolateneſs of a diſmal Condition. Hap-
Col. 1.12. pineſs in Holy Writ is called *Light*, and

and Heaven the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Thoſe who are caſt into utter Darkneſs, are removed to the fartheſt Diſtance from God, who is the Fountain of Life, and in whoſe Light the Bleſſed ſee Light. *Pſal.*

It is called *The Blackneſs of Darkneſs*, *i. e.* the moſt Horrid, into which no glimpſe of Light ſhines. This ſtate is worſe than that of a Malefactor, who is condemned to be made up between two Walls, there to periſh in Darkneſs, Hunger, and Solitude. 2 *Pet.* 2. 17

Sometime this dreadful miſery is ſignified by a *Pit which hath no bottom*, into which the ungodly are to be caſt; and ſometime by the Torment of a *perpetual Rack*: ſome-

Rev. 14. 10. ſometime by a *Cup of Wrath*, called *the Wine of the Wrath of God*, mixt with bitter Ingredients; and in this World God doth make ſinners to drink ſome drops, but in the great day he will make them Pſ. 75. 8. drink up the Dregs of it, the bitter Wrath which lies in the bottom, in which is no Alloy of Mercy. Laſtly, by the pains of the *ſecond Death* which the ungodly muſt endure; which is a thouſand times worſe than the firſt; for that is but a Temporal ſeparation of the Soul from the Body, this an Eternal ſeparation of Body and Soul from God.

2. The

2. The greatneſs of this Miſery is plainly declared by the deep impreſſions, which we are told it will make upon the ſpirits of damned Impenitents, as we perceive the acuteneſs of pain which men ſuffer by the grievouſneſs of their Cries. Our Saviour ſays, that *Matth.* 8. 12. in the place to which the Impenitent ſhall be condemned, there will be *weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth.* Theſe are Expreſſions of extreme grief, and ſhow the extremity of Miſery. A ſmall matter will not make one cry out, nor a little cold make the Teeth chatter. No, it is *Rev.* 6. 17. becauſe *the great day of wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to abide it?* The Impenitent would then be glad of Annihilation; it would be

be good for them that they were nothing, or as our Saviour ſays, *That they had never been born.* In great Anguiſh they will ſay to the *Mountains, fall on us, and to the Rocks, cover us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:* But the Rocks will be as deaf to the Impenitent then, as they are to God now.

3. Thirdly, The Impenitents miſery is made known to them by four particular Notices which are given them of their dreadful Condition in the other World.

1. They

1. They are told beforehand what Company they ſhall have in Hell, and that is no better than the *Devil and his Angels*, Haters and hated of God: So the Sentence runs, *Go ye curſed into the Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* You hold of his ſide, and it is fit you ſhould ſhare in his Lot. I called you to the hopes of my Mercy, and offered you a part in the happineſs of Obedient Souls; but you rather choſe to comply with your own and my Enemy, and to periſh with Satan, rather than to hearken to me. Get you gone from me and all the bleſſed into that Fire, which was not deſigned for you, but was appointed as the puniſhment of Devils;

Matth. 25.41.

Wiſd. 2. 24.

but ſince you would have your portion in it, I confirm your choice.

This is ſad: For the Devils were always, and are ſtill, Enemies to Mankind: They were Murderers from the beginning, and are Malicious to the end. To be ſhut up with ſuch Companions is a greater Torment than to be nailed up in a Veſſel among Serpents. Will impenitent ſinners be able to endure this? *Can they dwell with everlaſting Burnings? Can they make an agreement with Hell, and a League with Devils?* Do they think that curſed Fiends will make them welcome in Hell, becauſe they have perſwaded them to come thither? Can they expect entertainment

ment from ſuch as are ſhut up in a lothſom Dungeon? What help will they give others, who are themſelves in unſpeakable Torments, and who are ſo malicious, that, if they could, they would not? *It is better to repent, than to go to ſuch Company.*

2. The Impenitent will be exceedingly pain'd, becauſe they will then ſee that it was their own folly, which brought them into the Miſery which they ſhall then ſuffer; and that their Obſtinacy deprived them of the Eternal Happineſs, of which they might have been poſſeſſors. Thoſe who in their life time would not be at leiſure to be ſaved, ſhall then be forced to entertain multitudes of

thoughts which will blow the Coles of the unquenchable Fire. They will be galled perpetually by conſidering how ſottiſhly they periſhed, ſillily preferring a few ſhort Pleaſures before everlaſting Felicity, and that notwithſtanding it was offered them, and they often perſwaded to chuſe it. They will then ſee, and grieve to ſee it was folly enough to have choſen the Temporary Pleaſures of ſin, though for that they ſhould only have been deprived of Eternal Joys; but that it was the higheſt Madneſs, when for that they ſhall alſo ſuffer Eternal Pains, and find that the greatneſs of their Worldly Proſperity, which they ſo much deſired, having heightened their ſin, ſhall

alſo

alſo add to the ſharpneſs of their puniſhment.

They will then ſee how ſottiſhly they followed the evil Example of their fellow ſinners, trampling upon God's Commands, and be ſenſible of the meanneſs of the Excuſe which they made for their Unbelief, when they ſaid, They could not think there was ſuch a place as Hell, becauſe they never talked with any that was there, or ever heard it proved by Philoſophy. And they will wiſh then that they had believed God, who told them that there was ſuch a place, that they might endeavour to eſcape it, and not have hearkened to their Ranting Companions, who not being able to pro-

duce any Arguments againſt it, made it their work to huff the belief of it out of the World; and that the rather, becauſe they well knew, that if there be ſuch a place, they themſelves muſt be forced to take an undeſirable Lodging in it. They will then ſee that it was unreaſonable to aſk for Demonſtrations in matters of Divine Revelation, where God demands Faith upon his Word, remembring how ſillily the old World laughed at *Noah* for building a Ship to ſail, as they thought, upon dry ground, refuſing to believe that there would be a Deluge, till they were aflote upon the Waves of it.

They

They will ſee then that Diſbelief, after plain Declarations of God's Will, was not Courage, but ſtupid Preſumption; and that continuance in ſin againſt great Reaſons to the contrary, was a malicious Obſtinacy. They will then confeſs that no Tentation was a juſt Counterpoiſe to God's Promiſes, and that their ſenſual Appetites were no lawful warrant for the contradiction of the Reaſon of their Minds, and that it was extreme folly to ſlight the Motions of God's Spirit, and hearken to the Suggeſtions of the Devil. Will any dare to ſay to God then, *I knew thou waſt auſtere, and reapeſt where thou didſt not ſow?* No; but remembring that they were graci-

ouſly and often aſſiſted, they will then too late curſe the baſeneſs of their Negligence and Ingratitude.

They will then be aſhamed to return to God, having done nothing of the Errand upon which he ſent them into the World, but very much to the contrary of it; and be afraid, becauſe they go away *not having left any Teſtimony of their Vertue behind them*, but many damning Examples of Vice. They will hate their Being, perceiving by the ſharp Remorſe of their once baffled Conſciences, that they muſt be their own Tormentors: whilſt the ſpace which was granted them for Repentance, makes their Impenitence more Cri-

Criminal; and the ſenſe of their having highly deſerved what they ſuffer will make them acknowledge, that they are but juſtly deprived of that ſmall Relief, which is commonly allowed to the Miſerable, Pity.

3. Thirdly, The Impenitent will be gal'd with Envy, to ſee others poſſeſs that Happineſs which once they might have enjoyed, but then ſlighted, and of which they are now for ever deprived. This we learn from our Saviour, *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth, when ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you your ſelves thruſt out. And they ſhall come from the Eaſt, and from* Luke 13, 28, 29.

from the Weſt, and from the North, and from the South, and ſhall ſit down in the Kingdom of God. This ſight will whet the Teeth of the never dying Worm, which will not only bite with the never ceaſing remembrance of their unworthineſs, and vex with the pain of late Repentance and continual Self-accuſation; but alſo pine with Envy to ſee others happy in what they threw away. That which
v. 30. our Saviour added in this matter, is very conſiderable, *There are laſt which ſhall be firſt, and there are firſt which ſhall be laſt.* There are many which proud ſinners deſpiſe, as perſons a great way farther from Happineſs than themſelves, whom they laugh at for their Ignorance,

ſlight

ſlight for their mean Condition, and jeer for their preciſe Life, which ſhall enter into the Kingdom of God, when they themſelves ſhall be ſtopt. So it was with the Jews to whom our Saviour ſpoke, they looked upon themſelves as Sons of the Kingdom, Heirs of Happineſs, great in Knowledge, ſplendid in their Family, beloved of God, ſatisfied in preſent Enjoyments, and big with Expectation; yet theſe ſo ſeemingly forward ſhould be overrun by ſuch as they thought unworthy to eat with them; and theſe ſhould ſit down with their pious Anceſtors, where they, their boaſtful Progeny, ſhould be excluded.

This

This matter is well expreſſed *Wiſd.* 5. from the firſt Verſe to the ſeventh, *Then ſhall the righteous man ſtand in great boldneſs before the face of ſuch as have afflicted him, and made no account of his Labours. When they ſee it, they ſhall be troubled with terrible fear, and ſhall be amazed at the ſtrangeneſs of his ſalvation, ſo far beyond all that they looked for. And they repenting and groaning for anguiſh of ſpirit, ſhall ſay within themſelves, This was he whom we had ſometime in Deriſion, and a Proverb of Reproach. We Fools accounted his life madneſs, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbred among the Children of God, and his lot is among the Saints? Therefore have we erred from the way of Truth,*

Truth, and the Light of Righteouſneſs hath not ſhined upon us.

This excellent Author gives an account of theſe Hectors, *Chap.* 2. where he tells us of them, that they placed all Happineſs in this preſent Life—*Verſe* 2. *We are born at all adventure, and we ſhall be hereafter as though we had never been:* and therefore they *crown'd their Heads with Roſe-buds, and filled themſelves with wine*, being careful *leſt they ſhould go away without their part of Jollity.* As to the Righteous man, he declares their carriage *verſe* 10, 12, 13, 14, 15. Therefore they abuſed him with Rudeneſs, and treated him with all Cruelty in this World; but when they come into the other, and ſee him

him ſtand in great boldneſs before God, they are ſeized with a terrible fear, and vexed with Indignation at his Happineſs, amazed at the ſtrangeneſs of his ſalvation, whom before they ſcorn'd. All Impenitent ſinners will be in ſuch pain at our Saviour's coming, when they ſee obedient Souls taken up to meet him in the Air, and find themſelves left upon the burning Earth, till they be called before his Throne, and be there adjudged to a worſe Fire.

Heb. 4. 1. The Author to the *Hebrews* ſet a ſharp Edge upon his Exhortation, when he put it into theſe words, *Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his Reſt, any of you ſhould come ſhort of it.*

It

It is not eaſie to imagin what grief ſeized the Unbelieving Jews, when they ſaw *Canaan*, and beheld thoſe before them who were to go into that good Land, but themſelves bar'd from it. After the pronuntiation of that ſad Doom, with what pain did they wear away the hated remnant of their Lives, wandring in the Wilderneſs? Much more grievous will it be to ſee the Saviour of the World come with his glorious Attendants, and take up all good men and women, and carry them to the Heavenly *Canaan*, and leave the Impenitent, not to periſh in the Wilderneſs, but to be carried to that Company and Torment which I have mentioned before. *Who would*

would not repent that knows this?

4. The miſery of the Impenitent will be unſupportable, becauſe they will deſpair of ever mending their Condition. It muſt needs put Vinegar into their Wounds, when they are aſſured that they cannot be healed.

This Aſſurance depends upon two things,

1. Upon this, That they are told before hand that the Sentence which will be pronounced, is irreverſible.
2. Upon this, That they know that he who pronounceth it, is Omnipotent,

tent, and ſo can ſecure the Execution of it.

1. The Sentence is recorded in Scripture, and there we find it Irreverſible: It is, *Go into everlaſting Fire, into Fire which ſhall never be quenched; the Worm which torments you ſhall never die. The Puniſhment is everlaſting.* Thoſe who are caſt into the Lake are ordered to be *tormented there for ever and ever.* Matt. 25. ult. Rev. 20. 14.

This is the Sentence, and he who pronounceth it is Omnipotent, and ſo can ſecure the Execution of it. He who could hinder the Fire of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Furnace from burning, tormenting, or conſuming his Servants,

T. muſt

muſt needs be able to make a Fire which will burn and torment, and yet not conſume his Enemies. Shall bold ſinners be annihilated becauſe they deſire it, knowing they ſhall have no part of Felicity, if there be any in the other World? No; God hath appointed them worſe than ſo; and it is but juſt. Why ſhould not God puniſh ſuch as long as he pleaſeth, who ſinned as long as they could? Why ſhould their puniſhment have an end, who would never leave ſinning? Life was propounded upon good terms, which if it were refuſed, it was declared that Death would be the Conſequent: they were perſwaded to chuſe Life, they would not; and having refuſed it, will they be angry

angry that they ſuffer what they would have? A Law was given by the Soveraign Rector of the World, Death was threatned upon the breach of it; they would break it: they were condemned by that Law; yet Pardon was offered, they would not accept it: ſo that they periſht not becauſe they ſinned, nor yet becauſe they were condemned; but becauſe they would be Executed. Their Miſery is their Choice. But, as I ſaid, this makes it unſpeakably great, it will have no end. There is no ἀντάλλαγμα, as the LXXII. tranſlate the twentieth *Verſe* of *Pſalm* 55. no Ranſom for ſuch hereafter, as would not return from ſin by Repentance here.

Dives was not only vexed with Envy, when he looked up and ſaw *Lazarus* in *Abraham*'s boſom, but mad with Rage when he ſaw the unpaſſable Gulf between himſelf and them. That Parable is a Map of the future ſtate of Impenitents, they have no hope to aſcend out of the Infernal Pit; they are ſent Priſoners to that Goal, whoſe Bars are made too ſtrong for all created Power to break.

The

The Concluſion.

Now I am come to the Cloſe of this Diſcourſe, which I ſhall ſhut up with this ſhort Exhortation; *Let us all*, in the fear of God, endeavour by timely and true Repentance to eſcape the Wrath to come: *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, let us perſwade our ſelves to this Duty.* Let us not baffle all the Methods of his Grace, and amongſt others this of his Threatnings. Have we no Paſſion upon which God can work? Are not the Threatnings which I have mentioned dreadful? Have

we no Fear in us? or are we afraid of any thing but God? Have we loſt the uſe of the Natural Principle of Self-preſervation, when it is applied to our greateſt Danger? Are Eternal Happineſs and Miſery words only? Do they not ſignifie things of greateſt Importance? And yet do they make no Impreſſion upon our hard hearts? Sure then they are grown perfect Stone, and not to be ſoftned, except in the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone. *No, rather, O merciful God, take them out of our Breaſts, and into their room put hearts of Flesh.* Muſt we needs ſin on though we be damned for it? What is it that makes

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ſin ſo dear to us? We have been told by one whom we ought to believe, *That it were much better for us to go into Heave with an Eye plucked out, with the loſs of a right Hand, or a Foot cut off, than to carry a whole Body into Hell.* Yes; but we ſin for fear. How? *Do we fear them, who can kill the Body* (if they be permitted from above) *but after that can do no more, and not dread him who can caſt both Body and Soul into Hell? It is a dreadful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.* Matth. 10.28.

Impenitent, to what purpoſe doſt thou ſin on, and put the Evil Day from thee, whoſe approach thou canſt no more delay, than hinder the Morning Sun from riſing at the appointed Minute? Doſt thou not know that thy *Judgment doth not linger, and that thy Damnation ſlumbereth not?* Pardon upon Repentance is given at an eaſie rate, and upon that it may be had. Sure thou dareſt not aſk of God leave to ſin; what then makes thee ſo bold as not to repent? He that ſins, Rebels; He that Repents not continues his Rebellion; And can that man think that God will not be even with him? *How*

2 *Pet.* 2. 3.

can

can ſuch a one eſcape the Damnation of Hell? Shall God ever hearken to thee crying from Hell, who doſt deſpiſe him who hath ſpoken to thee from Heaven? Be wiſe, fear and repent, remembring that good advice which is given thee *Luke* 12. 57, 58, 59. *Why even of your ſelves judge ye not what is right? When thou goeſt with thine Adverſary to the Magiſtrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayeſt be delivered from him; leſt he hale thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and the Officer caſt thee into Priſon. I tell thee thou ſhall not depart thence till thou haſt paid the very laſt mite.* Matt. 23. 33.

mite. In theſe words our Saviour doth reproach men, for not uſing the ſame prudence in managing their affairs with God, which they do with men. It is their known practiſe, that when they have a difference of Concern with another who hath an Advantage againſt them, they compoſe it as ſoon as they can, hoping the ſooner they do it to have fairer terms, and fearing that if they put off the matter till it come before the Judge, he will pronounce ſeverely againſt them, and that having ſtood out to the laſt, their Adverſary will make his benefit of the Sentence, and force them to pay the whole Debt,

Debt, or elſe lie in Priſon.

How much more ſhould we give diligence to be reconciled to God? Shall we maintain an Action at Law in which we are ſure to be caſt, and that againſt God? *Do we contend with the Lord? Are we ſtronger than He?* No; let us humble our ſelves ſpeedily before him, and make our peace as ſoon as we can. He that ſtands out in ſin can hope for no pardon at the day of Judgment. Let us do as the Pſalmiſt bids us, *Kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ye periſh in the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him.* Let us with all Expreſſions of humble Sub-

Pſ. 2. 12.

jection

jection addreſs our ſelves to the Son of God, who only can reconcile us to his Father; and do it ſpeedily, leſt loitering in the way of ſin, his Wrath overtake us, and we periſh in our ſinful Courſe. If his Anger once begin to burn, there is no Happineſs, but for ſuch who beforehand have made him their Friend, and ſo can now put their Truſt in him. And let every Penitent for his Encouragement know, that in ſo doing he doth comply with the Intentions of God, who deſigning our good, hath made his Threatnings one means of our Salvation. He hath menaced ſin, and let us know the ſad Doom of the Impenitent;

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nitent; not that thereby we ſhould be affrighted into Deſpair, but that by this means we might be more eaſily perſwaded to ſin no more, and ſo eſcape the Puniſhment threatned: For our Saviour hath told us what he hath ſaid of the Wrath to come, as he hath all other things in his Goſpel, to this end, *that we might be ſaved.* Joh. 5. 34

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Pag.15.lin.7.for bad,read bold.p.28.l.13.r.but.p.30.l. penult.r. what ſhame,what. p.50.l.14.r.τύποι. p.67.l.15. r.faults. p.78.l.9.r.can truly ſay. p.84.l.11.r.ſound.p.93. l.11.r.chequer'd. l.14.r.plain. p.101.l.2. r.Love. p.103. l.17.r.with Reſerves. p.118. l.1. r.ſmooth. p.123.l.16. r. pleaſures. p.124.l.13. for careful obſervance, r. careful-neſs. p.132.l.19. for liſe,r.uſe. p.137.l.12.for in, r.with. p.151.l.15.r.perpend. p.155.l.ult.r.reaching.p.174.l.1.r. up in. p.177.l.ult.r.have. p.178.l.4.r.κακὸν. p.182. l.9. for bodies,r.ceaſing of bodily. p.185. l.17.r. ἡνίοχος. p.187.l.14.after θεῖον, add,the Divine part. p.219.l.3. dele full.

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